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KAFIR NOBILITY.—PAGE 193.—*Frontispiece.*

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SIX MONTHS AT THE CAPE

OR

LETTERS TO PERIWINKLE FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

BY R. M. BALLANTYNE,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFEBOAT," "THE IRON HORSE," ETC. ETC.

With Illustrations by S. E. Waller

FROM SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

This book makes no pretension whatever to the dignity of a treatise on South Africa.

I went to the Cape of Good Hope for private purposes, and had not leisure to devote to that important colony the study and investigation which it deserved.

During my limited rambles, however, I necessarily saw and heard a great deal that was extremely interesting, and wrote an account of the same in a series of letters to my excellent friend *Periwinkle*. Those letters are now before the reader.

R. M. BALLANTYNE.

London, 1878.

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SIX MONTHS AT THE CAPE

OR

LETTERS FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

LETTER I.

"A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE."

SOUTH AFRICA, 1876.

DEAR PERIWINKLE,—Since that memorable, not to say miserable, day, when you and I parted at St. Katherine's Docks, with the rain streaming from our respective noses—rendering tears superfluous if not impossible—and the noise of preparation for departure damaging the fervour of our "farewell"—since that day, I have ploughed with my "adventurous keel" upwards of six thousand miles of the "main," and now write to you from the wild Karroo of Southern Africa.

The Karroo is not an animal. It is a spot—at present a lovely spot. I am surrounded by—by

nature and all her concomitants. Mimosa trees, prickly pears, and aloes remind me that I am not in England. Ostriches, stalking on the plains, tell that I am in Africa. It is not much above thirty years since the last lion was shot in this region, and the kloofs, or gorges, of the blue mountains that bound the horizon are, at the present hour, full of "Cape-tigers," wild deer of different sorts, baboons, monkeys, and—but hold! I must not forestall. Let me begin at the beginning.

The adventurous keel above referred to was not, as you know, my own private property. I shared it with some two hundred or so of human beings, and a large assortment of the lower animals. Its name was the "Windsor Castle"—one of that magnificent line of ocean steamers belonging to the enterprising firm of Donald Currie and Company, of which it is impossible to speak in too exalted terms.

There is something appallingly disagreeable in leave-taking. I do not refer now to the sentiment, but to the manner of it. Neither do I hint, my dear fellow, at *your* manner of leave-taking. Your abrupt "Well, old boy, *bon voyage*, good-bye, bless you," followed by your prompt retirement from the scene, was perfect in its way, and left

nothing to be desired ; but leave-takings in general—how different !

Have you never stood on a railway platform to watch the starting of an express ?

Of course you have, and you have seen the moist faces of those two young sisters, who had come to "see off" that dear old aunt, who had been more than a mother to them since that day, long ago, when they were left orphans, and who was leaving them for a few months, for the first time for many years ; and you have observed how, after kissing and weeping on her for the fiftieth time, they were forcibly separated by the exasperated guard, and the old lady was firmly, yet gently, thrust into her carriage, and the door savagely locked with one hand, while the silver whistle was viciously clapt to the lips with the other, and the last "goo—ood—bye—d—arling !" was drowned by a shriek, and puff and clank, as the train rolled off. You have observed how the two young sisters madly attempted to run after the train, but were stopped, and then buried their moist faces in their handkerchiefs for a few moments in uncontrollable grief; how, on looking up again, they found that the train had rolled back (having merely gone ahead to make room for another

carriage); how the face that stopped opposite to them was not that of their aunt, but that of an unsentimental bad boy, who was grinning at them from ear to ear; how they found the aunt again after an excited search, and were "*so* glad" to have one more chance, "and such an unexpected one too!" of saying good-bye; and how vexatiously the poor things were interrupted and knocked about by passengers wanting to get in, or wanting to get out. How, after a time, both the young ladies and the aunt really began to wish that the train *would* start, although each of them would have died under the train-wheels on the spot, rather than have acknowledged the presence of such a thought even to herself; how, when the train itself seemed to be getting impatient and made a few slight convulsive moves, which compelled every one to stand back, the two young ladies took to pantomimic methods of saying good-bye, such as the motion of the lips without sound, and the raising of the eyebrows, with endearing expansions of the mouth, and intelligent noddings of the head, and unmeaning gestures of the hands,—in all of which efforts, not being used to pantomime, and being somewhat swollen as well as moist, they came at length to look

absolutely idiotic. How, after a quarter of an hour's delay, they became quite desperate and turned to express hypocritical interest in subjects utterly unconnected with the pending separation, —such as the book-stall, or the weighing-machine ; how, when a frightful shriek from the engine sent a shock of condemnation to their deceptive hearts, they turned again to the aunt in penitent haste, and recommenced the insane pantomime, and kept it up violently till the train was fairly off and out of sight ; and how, at length, they wiped their eyes for the last time and left the station with a strange feeling of repose ; silent, and not a little perplexed to find that the sad parting which they had expected would have become more and more sorrowful, had been converted at last, somehow, into a relief, if not a positive pleasure.

You 've seen it all, have you not, over and over again, in every degree and modification ? No doubt you have, and as it is with parting humanity at railway stations, so is it at steamboat wharves.

There are differences, however. After you had left, I stood and sympathised with those around me, and observed that there is usually more emotion on a wharf than on a platform—naturally enough, as, in the case of long sea voyages, partings,

it may be presumed, are for longer periods, and dangers are supposed to be greater and more numerous than in land journeys,—though this is open to question. The waiting-process, too, is prolonged. Even after the warning bell had sent non-voyagers ashore, they had to stand for a considerable time in the rain while we cast off our moorings or went through some of those incomprehensible processes by which a leviathan steamer is moved out of dock.

After having made a first false move, which separated us about three yards from the wharf—inducing the wearied friends on shore to brighten up and smile, and kiss hands, and wave kerchiefs, with that energy of decision which usually marks a really final farewell—our steamer remained in that position for full half an hour, during which period we gazed from the bulwarks, and our friends gazed from under their dripping umbrellas across the now impassable gulf, in mute resignation.

At that moment a blessing of inconceivable magnitude befel us. A boy let his cap drop from the wharf into the water! It was an insignificant matter in itself, but it acted like the little safety-valve which prevents the bursting of a high-pressure engine. Voyagers and friends no longer

looked at each other like melancholy imbeciles. A gleam of intense interest suffused every visage, intelligence sparkled in every eye, as we turned and concentrated our attention on that cap! The unexpressed blessing of the whole company, ashore and afloat, descended on the uncovered head of that boy, who, all unconscious of the great end he was fulfilling, made frantic and futile efforts with a long piece of stick to recover his lost property. He was watched with —considering the value of the cap—unnatural earnestness, encouraged with ridiculous fervour, patted on the head, metaphorically, with positive affection, and I have no doubt would have been presented with two or three hundred new caps on the spot if each relieved one had seen his way, in the circumstances, so to express his feelings.

But we did at last get under weigh, and then there were some touches of real pathos. I felt no disposition to note the humorous elements around when I saw that overgrown lad of apparently eighteen summers, press to the side and wave his thin hands in adieu to an elderly lady on shore, while tears that he could not, and evidently did not care to restrain, ran down his hollow cheeks. He had no friend on board, and was being sent

to the Cape for the benefit of his health. So, too, was another young man—somewhere between twenty and thirty years—whose high colour, brilliant eye, and feeble step told their own tale. But this man was not friendless. His young wife was there, and supported him with tender solicitude towards a seat. These two were in the after-cabin. Among the steerage passengers the fell disease was represented in the person of a little boy. "Too late" was written on the countenances of at least two of these,—the married man and the little boy.

As to the healthy passengers, what shall I say of them? Need I tell you that every species of humanity was represented?

There were tall men, and short men, as well as men broad and narrow,—mentally, not less than physically. There were ladies pretty, and ladies plain, as well as grave and gay. Fat and funny ones we had, also lean ones and lugubrious. The wise and foolish virgins were represented. So too were smokers and drinkers; and not a few earnest, loving, and loveable, men and women.

A misanthropical tendency which had been gaining on me of late had induced me to believe that, after passing middle-life, a man cannot make

new and enthusiastic friendships. Never was I more mistaken. It is now my firm conviction that men may and do make friendships of the closest kind up to the end of their career. Of course the new friends do not, and cannot, take the place of the old. It seems to me that they serve a higher purpose, and, by enabling one to realise the difference between the old and the new, draw the cords of ancient friendship tighter. At all events, you may depend upon it, my dear Periwinkle, that no new friend shall ever tumble *you* out of the niche which you occupy in my bosom!

But be this as it may, it is a fact that in my berth—which held four, and was full all the voyage—there was a tall, dark, powerful, middle-aged man, an Englishman born in Cape Colony, who had been "home" for a trip, and was on his way out again to his African home on the great Karroo. This man raised within me feelings of disgust when I first saw him in the dim light of our berth, because he was big, and I knew that a big man requires more air to fill his lungs than a little one, and there was no superabundant air in our berth—quite the reverse. This man occupied the top berth opposite to mine. Each morning

as I awoke my eyes fell on his beard of iron-grey, and I gazed at his placid countenance till he awoke—or I found his placid countenance gazing at me till *I* awoke. From gazing to nodding in recognition is an easy step in ordinary circumstances, but not when one's head is on one's pillow. We therefore passed at once, without the ceremony of nodding, into a quiet "good morning." Although reticent he gradually added a smile to the "good morning," and I noticed that his smile was a peculiarly pleasant one. Steps that succeed the "first" are generally easy. From disliking this man—not on personal, but purely selfish grounds—I came to like him ; then to love him. I have reason to believe that the attachment was mutual. His name—why should I not state it ? I don't think he would object—is Hobson.

In the bunk below Hobson lay a young Wesleyan minister. He was a slender young fellow, —modest and thoughtful. If Hobson's bunk had given way, I fear that his modesty and thoughtfulness might have been put to a severe test. I looked down upon this young Wesleyan from my materially exalted position, but before the voyage was over I learned to look up to him from a

spiritually low position. My impression is that he was a "meek" man. I may be mistaken, but of this am I certain, that he was one of the gentlest, and at the same time one of the most able men in the ship. At all events, he preached one of the best sermons we had, and this is saying something, as you will admit when I tell you that we had no fewer than ten representatives of "the Church" on board,—Wesleyan, Dutch-Reformed, Episcopalian, and Lutheran.

"Jack" had his little touch of chaff at this element, of course, especially at the number of them, and the swearing smoko-drinkers held them, no doubt, in contempt—a contempt equalled only by their love of "pipes, baccy, and lush," but you know me well enough to understand me when I say that it was this clerical element which—*despite* differences of opinion, hot arguments, frequent disputes, touches of unchristian narrowness of thought in some, and occasional ebullitions of temper in others—lent dignity and interest and pith to the whole voyage.

But, to return to my berth—which, by the way, I was often loth to do, owing to the confined air below, and the fresh glorious breezes on deck—the man who slept under me was a young

banker, a clerk, going out to the Cape to make his fortune, and a fine capable-looking fellow he was, inclined rather to be receptive than communicative. He frequently bumped me with his head in getting up; I, not unfrequently, put a foot upon his nose, or toes, in getting down.

What can I say about the sea that has not been said over and over again in days of old? This, however, is worthy of record, that we passed the famous Bay of Biscay in a dead calm. We did not "lay" one single "day" on that "Bay of Biscay, O!" The "O!" seems rather awkwardly to imply that I am not stating the exact truth, but I assure you that it is a fact. More than this, we had not a storm all the way to the Cape. It was a pure pleasure excursion—a sort of yacht voyage—from beginning to end; very pleasant at the time, and delightful now to dwell upon; for, besides the satisfaction of making a new friend like Hobson, there were others to whom I was powerfully drawn, both by natural sympathy and intellectual bias.

There was a Wesleyan minister—Caldecott by name—also an Englishman born in South Africa, and of the race of Anak, with whom, and his amiable wife, and pretty children, I

fraternised powerfully. My soul was also gladdened by intercourse with a Dutch-Reformed clergyman—the Rev. Leon Cachet—well known in the Colony, especially in the Transvaal—who, with his pleasant wife and daughter, was on his way back to South Africa after a brief trip to Europe. He was argumentative; so, you know, am I. He was also good-tempered, therefore we got on well. He is of the stock of Abraham—I liked him the more on that account. He is a Christian Jew, and a Dutchman by birth.

It would be an endless business to name and describe all the passengers who were personally attractive, and who were more or less worthy of description. There were, among others, a genial and enthusiastic Dutch-African legislator of the colony; a broad-shouldered but retiring astronomer; also a kindly Cape merchant; and a genial English banker, with their respective wives and families. I had the good fortune to sit in the midst of these at meals, close to Captain Hewat, who is unquestionably, what many of us styled him, a "trump." He is also a Scotchman. There was likewise a diamond-digger, with a wife who had presented to the world twenty-one children—so she said,—and who spoke of them numerically.

"No. 19," she told me, was to meet her in Cape-town on her arrival! There was a man, too, who seemed to hate everybody except himself, and who was a most fitting subject for the efforts of the men on board whose professional duty it was to reclaim "lost sheep." There were several sportsmen; one of whom, a gallant son of Mars, and an author, had traversed the "Great Lone Land" of British America, and had generally, it seemed to me, "done" the world, with the exception of Central Africa, which he was at last going to add to his list. There were also troops of children, who behaved remarkably well, considering the trials they had to undergo; and numerous nurses, some of whom required more attention than all the ladies put together.

You will now, no doubt, expect an account of romantic adventures on the deep and narrow escapes, and alarms of fire, and men overboard, and thrilling narratives. If so, your expectations are doomed to disappointment. We fished for no sharks, we chased no whales, we fell in with no slavers or pirates. Nevertheless we saw flying fish, and we had concerts and lectures; and such delightful perambulations of the decks, and such charming *impromptu* duets and glees and solos

on retired parts of the deck in moonlight nights, and such earnest discussions, and such genial companionship! Truly that voyage was one of those brilliant episodes which occur only once in a lifetime, and cannot be repeated; one of those green spots in memory, which, methinks, will survive when all other terrestrial things have passed away.

I will write no more about it, however, at present. Neither will I proceed in what is usually considered the natural manner with my epistles—namely, step by step. Arrivals, cities, travelling, roads, inns, and all such, I will skip, and proceed at one bound to that which at the present moment is to me most interesting, merely premising that we reached Capetown (of which more hereafter) in November,—the South African summer—after a voyage of twenty-five days.

I am now sojourning at Ebenezer—Hobson's residence on the Karroo.

LETTER II.

HUNTING SPRINGBOKS ON THE KARROO.

To start for the hunting-field at seven in the morning in a carriage and six, smacks of royalty and sounds luxurious, but in South Africa there are drawbacks connected therewith.

Hobson's farm is, as I have said, on the Karroo—those vast plains which at some seasons resemble a sandy desert, and at others are covered with rich verdure and gorgeous flowers. They are named after the small, succulent, Karroo-bush, which represents the grass of other plains, and is excellent food for cattle, sheep, and ostriches.

These plains embrace a considerable portion of Cape Colony. The Karroo is pre-eminently lumpy. Its roads in most places are merely the result of traffic. They, also, are lumpy. Our carriage was a native "cart," by which is meant a plain and powerful machine with springs that are

too strong readily to yield. Five of our team were mules, the sixth was a pony.

Our party at starting numbered five, but grew as we progressed. We took with us provisions and fodder for two days. The driving was undertaken by Hobson's nephew, assisted by his eldest son—"six-foot Johnny." There was a double necessity for two drivers. To hold the reins of five kicking mules and a victimised pony required both hands as well as all the strength of the cousin, though he was a powerful fellow, and the management of the whip claimed both arms and all the strength, as well as the undivided attention of his assistant. The whip was a salmon-rod in appearance, without exaggeration. It had a bamboo handle somewhere between twelve and fourteen feet long, with a proportionate lash. The operator sometimes found it convenient to stand when he made a cast with his fishing-rod weapon. He was an adept with it; capable, it seemed to me, of picking a fly off one of the leader's ears.

There was some trouble in keeping our team quiet while rifles, ammunition, provisions, etc., were being stowed in the cart.

At last the cousin gave the word. Six-foot Johnny made a cast. The lash grazed the leader's

flank with a crack that might have shamed a small revolver. The mules presented first their noses, then their heels to the sky; the cart leaped from the ground, and we were off—bumping, rattling, crashing, swinging, over the wild Karroo, followed by some half dozen horses led by two mounted Hottentot attendants.

My friend Hobson, greatly to our grief, did not accompany us, owing to inflamed eyes, but I shared the back seat of the cart with his brother Jonathan, a tall strapping man of middle age and modest mien, who seemed to me the *beau-idéal* of a colonial hero.

In an hour or so we came to the solitary farm of a Mr. Green, who regaled us with a sumptuous breakfast, and lent me a spur. I had the liberal offer of two spurs, but as, in hunting with the rifle, it is sometimes advisable to sit on one's right heel, and memory during the excitement of the chase is apt to prove faithless, I contented myself with one spur,—feeling pretty confident that if I persuaded the left side of my horse to go, the right side could not well remain behind.

Mr. Green joined us. Thereafter we came to the residence of a Mr. Priest, who also joined us with his son, and thus we sped on over the flat sandy

STARTING FOR THE HUNT.—Page 18.

plains, inhaling the sweet scent of mimosa blossom, glowing in the fervid sunshine, and picking up comrades here and there, until about noon we reached the scene of our intended operations.

This was a vast, almost level plain named the Plaat River Flats. It lay between two rivers, was eight or ten miles wide and upwards of twenty miles in length—a mighty ocean, as it were, of short, compact Karroo, with a boundless horizon like the sea in all directions save one, where a great South African mountain range intercepted the view. Here and there a few clumps of mimosa bushes rose like islets, and lent additional interest to the scene.

We "out-spanned" and "off-saddled" here for luncheon, and found shelter from the sun under a mimosa, which was large enough to merit being styled a tree. Its thorns were from four to six inches in length.

The party had now swelled to fourteen—all stout hardy descendants of the English, Scotch, or Dutch settlers, who had originally peopled the land; good rifle shots, and splendid horsemen. One of them was conspicuous by his brawny arms, which were burnt to a deep brown in consequence of his preferring to hunt and work at all times

with shirt sleeves rolled up above the elbows. Another struck me as having the broadest pair of shoulders I ever saw in a man of his size.

"Capital water here," said Green to me, on alighting beside the mimosa-thorn.

"Indeed," said I, thirsting for some, "where is it?"

"Here! come; I'll show you."

He led me to a spot among the bushes where lay a small pond of thin mud the colour of weak tea with milk.

"There you are," said Green.

I looked at him inquiringly.

He looked at me and smiled.

I laughed.

Green grinned, and assured me that it was "first-rate water."

He dipped a cup, as he spoke, and drank it. So did his comrades, with evident satisfaction, though the liquid was so opaque that I could not see the bottom of a tea-cup when it was full.

There could be no further doubt on the point. These reckless and jovial South Africans—European by extraction though they were, and without a drop of black blood in their veins—had actually accommodated themselves to circum-

stances so far as to consider liquid mud good water! More than that, I found that most of the party deemed it a sufficient beverage, for they were all temperance men, if not total abstainers. Still further, I followed their example, drank of that yellow pond, and actually enjoyed it. Subsequently I made the discovery that there were small animals in it; after that I preferred it in the form of tea, which was quickly infused by our active Hottentots.

The discovery above referred to was made when Green (or Brownarms, or Broadshoulders, I forget which) was quaffing a cup of the cold element. Having drained it he spat out the last mouthful, and along with it a lively creature like a small shrimp, with something like a screw-propeller under its tail!

Enjoying our tea under the shade of the mimosa, we rested for an hour, and then, saddling our steeds and slinging on rifles and cartridge-pouches, we mounted, and sallied forth upon the plain.

A glorious sensation of freedom came over me as I felt my horse's springy step,—a sensation which brought powerfully back the memory of those days when I first galloped over the Ameri-

can prairies. Surely there must be a sympathy, a mesmeric influence, between a horse and his rider which sends a thrill through each. Hobson had lent me his own favourite horse Rob Roy. He was a charming creature; well made, active, willing and tender in the mouth, but, best of all, he "trippled" splendidly.

Trippling is a favourite gait in South Africa, especially among the Dutch farmers. It is something between pacing and ambling, a motion so easy that one scarce rises at all from the saddle. We trippled off into the vast plain towards the horizon, each horseman diverging a little from his comrades, like a fleet of fishing-boats putting out to sea. Most of the party rode without coats, for the sky was cloudless, and we looked for a broiling day. Brownarms, I observed, had his sleeves rolled up, as usual, to the shoulder. Six-foot Johnny rode a cream-coloured pony, which, like himself, enjoyed itself intensely, and seemed ready for anything. Each man grasped his rifle by the middle with the right hand, and rested the stock on his thigh.

Being a stranger to the work, I had been supplied with a Hottentot as well as a horse,—to guide me and carry my rifle; but I scorned to

ride without my weapon, and did not at first see the necessity of a guide in the circumstances. Ultimately I was only too glad to avail myself of his services!

The South Africans call Hottentots "boys," whatever their age or size may be. My "boy" was named Michael. He was a small wiry man of twenty or thirty,—more or less,—with a dirty brown face, dirty brown garments, and a dirty brown horse. Though a bad one to look at, it was a marvellous horse to go. Michael had a cavernous red mouth, and magnificent white teeth. Likewise he was gifted with a strong sense of the ludicrous, as I have reason to know.

We advanced slowly into the plain at first, and gradually scattered until some of the party began to look like mere specks in the distance. Presently I saw two or three of them break into a gallop, and observed a few moving spots of white on the horizon. I looked anxiously at my boy. He returned the gaze with glittering eyes and said "bok."

"Boks! are they?" said I, applying my spur and making a demivolt,—or something of that sort,—over an ant-bear hole.

Rob Roy stretched his legs with a will, but a

howl from Michael caused me to look round. He was trending off in another direction, and pointing violently towards something. He spoke nothing but Dutch. My acquaintance with that tongue was limited to the single word "Ja."

He was aware of this, and his visage became all eyes and mouth in his frantic effort to assure me it would be wise were I to follow his lead.

I turned at once and galloped alongside of him in faith.

It soon became clear what he aimed at. The horsemen on the far off horizon were driving the springboks towards the stream which bounded one side of the great plain. Mike was making for the bushes that bordered that stream in the hope of reaching them before the boks should observe us.

Oh! it was a glorious burst that first race over the wild Karroo, on a spirited steed, in the freshness of early morning—

"With the silent bushboy alone by my side,"

for he *was* silent, though tremendously excited. His brown rags fluttered in the self-made breeze, and his brown pony scrambled over the ground quite as fast as Rob Roy. We reached a clump of underwood in time, and pulled up, panting,

beside a bush which was high enough to conceal the horses.

Anxiously we watched here, and carefully did I look to my rifle,—a double-barrelled breach-loading "Soaper-Henry,"—to see that it was loaded and cocked, and frequently did I take aim at stump and stone to get my hand and eye well "in," and admiringly, with hope in every lineament, did Michael observe me.

"See anything of them, Mike?" I asked.

I might as well have asked a baboon. Mike only grinned, but Mike's grin once seen was not easily forgotten.

Suddenly Mike caught sight of something, and bolted. I followed. At the same moment pop! pop! went rifles in different parts of the plain. We could not see anything distant for the bushes, but presently we came to the edge of an open space, into which several springboks were trotting with a confusedly surprised air.

"Now Sar,—now's you chance," said Mike, using the only English sentence he possessed, and laying hold of the bridle of my horse.

I was on the ground and down on one knee in such a hurry, that to this day I know not by what process I got off the horse.

Usually, when thus taken by surprise, the springboks stop for a moment or two and gaze at the kneeling hunter. This affords a splendid though brief chance to take good aim, but the springboks were not inquisitive that day. They did not halt. I had to take a running shot, and the ball fell short, to my intense mortification. I had sighted for three hundred yards. Sighting quickly for five hundred, while the frightened animals were scampering wildly away, I put a ball in the dust just between the legs of one.

The leap which that creature gave was magnificent. Much too high to be guessed at with a hope of being believed! The full significance of the animal's name was now apparent. Charging a breach-loader is rapid work, but the flock was nine hundred or a thousand yards off before I could again take aim. In despair I fired and sent a bullet into the midst of them, but without touching one.

I now turned to look at the "boy," who was sitting on his pony with both eyes nearly shut, and a smile so wide that the double row of his teeth were exposed to the very last grinders!

But he became superhumanly grave and sympathetic as I turned towards him, and made a

remark in Dutch which was doubtless equivalent to "better luck next time."

Remounting I rode to the edge of the clump of bushes and found several of my companions, some of whom carried the carcases of springboks at their cruppers. Hope revived at once, and I set off with them in search of another flock.

"You've failed, I see," remarked my friend Jonathan Hobson in a sympathetic tone.

Ah! what a blessed thing is sympathy!

"Yes," said I; "my shots fell short."

"Don't let that discourage you," returned Jonathan, "you're not used to the Karroo. Distance is very deceptive. Sighting one's rifle is the chief difficulty in these regions, but you'll soon come to it."

Another flock of springboks was discovered at this moment on a distant knoll, towards which we trotted, trippled, and cantered. We quickly scattered,—each man taking his own course. Six-foot Johnny, already burdened with a buck, went off at reckless speed. He soon came near enough to cause the game to look up inquiringly. This made him draw rein and advance with caution in a sidling and indirect manner. In a few minutes the boks trotted off. We were now with-

in long range, and made a dash at racing-speed to head them. The creatures absolutely played with us at first, and performed some of their astounding leaps, as if for our special amusement. Had they set off at full speed at once we should not have had a chance, for they are fleeter than horses. Their manner of leaping is *à la* indiarubber ball. It is not a bound forwards, but a "stott" straight upwards,—six, eight, or nine feet,—without apparent effort, and displaying at each bound a ridge, or fold, of pure white hair on their backs which at other times is concealed.

We now "put on a spurt," and the leading men got near enough—between two and three hundred yards. They dismounted, dropped their bridles, and kneeled to take aim. Brownarms fired and brought one down—so did Broadshoulders. Six-foot Johnny in his eagerness let the cream pony stumble, somehow, and went over its head—also over his own, and landed on his knees. The bok he was after stopped to gaze at the catastrophe. Johnny, profiting by his position, took aim and tumbled it over.

Mike was by this time leading me towards an animal. We got within three hundred yards when it began to stretch out. Further pursuit

HUNTING—IN THREE TABLEAUX.—Page 29.

being useless, I pulled up, leaped off, kneeled, fired, and missed again—the ball, although straight, falling short. With wild haste I scrambled on Rob Roy—who, by the way, stood like a petrifaction when left with the bridle thrown over his head and hanging from his nose. The horses were trained to this.

Loading as I ran we soon came to a bok which had been turned by some of the other hunters. Again I raced, pulled up, leaped off, and fired. The pop! pop! was now going on all over the plain, and balls were whistling everywhere. Again my bok refused to stop to look at me—as he ought to have done—and again I missed. Michael's eyes were now quite shut, and his jaws visible to the wisdom teeth—supposing he possessed any.

Growing reckless under disappointment I now dashed away in pursuit of animals that had been scattered by the fusillade, and fired right and left at all ranges between two and ten hundred yards, but without any other effect than that of driving up the dust under two or three of them, and causing many of their astounding leaps. Soon the rest of the party were scattered so far on the plain as to be utterly out of sight and hearing. As far as sensation went, my "Tottie" and I were

as lonely in that wilderness as was Mungo Park in days gone by.

All this time the sun was blazing in the sky with unclouded and fervent heat. It had been 110° in the shade at Ebenezer a day or two before, therefore I judged it to have been much the same on this occasion. There was not a breath of wind. Everything was tremulous with heat.

Suddenly I beheld, with the deepest interest, a magnificent lake with beautiful islets scattered over its crystal breast. Often had I read of the *mirage* of African deserts, and much had I thought about it. Now, for the first time, it was before me. Never was deception more perfect. If I had not known that no such lake existed in the region I should have been almost ready to stake my life on the reality of what I saw. No wonder that thirsty travellers in unknown regions should have so often pushed forward in eager pursuit of this beautiful phantom.

"Things are not what they seem" truly! This applies to many terrestrial things, but to none of them more thoroughly than to the *mirage*.

While I was looking at it, the form of the lake altered sufficiently to have dispelled the illusion, if I had been labouring under it. In a few minutes

it passed away altogether, but only to reappear elsewhere.

Another curious effect, and rather absurd mistake, resulted from the different densities in the super-heated atmosphere which caused this *mirage*. Fancying that I saw two springboks on the horizon I pointed them out to my boy.

"Ja!" said Mike, nodding his head and riding towards them at a smart canter. As we advanced I observed that the boks began to grow rather larger than life, and that Mike slackened his pace and began to grin. It turned out that the objects were two carts with white canvas hoods, and when we came up to them we found they belonged to a party who had come out to join us, but who, up to that hour, had been unable to discover us in the vast hunting-field!

After directing them to our camp we proceeded on our way. That is to say Mike did. For myself, I was completely lost, and if left to myself should have been quite unable to return to camp.

While galloping along, revelling in the sunshine —in the love of which I will not yield to cats— we came suddenly on the largest snake I had yet seen. It was, I believe, a cobra, must have been fully six feet long, if not more, and was gliding

with an easy sinuous motion over the plain as fast apparently, as a man's ordinary running-pace. I observed that it did not get out of the way of small bushes, but went straight through them without the smallest check to its speed. It suddenly dived into a hole and disappeared. It is said that when snakes take to a hole to escape pursuit, some of them have a habit of causing their heads to stop abruptly at the entrance, and allowing their bodies and tails to flip past like the lash of a whip, so that if the pursuer were to thrust in his hand to grasp the tail he would be met by the fangs! As the bite of most South African snakes means death, if the part be not cut out, or otherwise effectually treated, handling them is carefully avoided. Nevertheless my friend Jonathan—when a younger man, let us hope!—was in the habit of occasionally catching deadly snakes by the tail, swinging them round his head, and dashing out their brains on a stone or tree!

Soon we perceived two of our comrades driving a flock of springboks towards the river. Mike at once diverged towards a clump of bushes which it seemed probable they would pass. In ten minutes we were down in a hollow, with the horses hid behind a mimosa thorn. The boks had not

seen us, being too much taken up with their pursuers; they came straight towards us.

"Now, sar," whispered Mike once again, while his eyes glared with glee, "*now's* you chance!"

I went down on one knee, carefully sighted the rifle, and looked up. The foremost bok was within good range. I fired and missed!

"Desolation!" said I, cramming in another cartridge while the flock diverged to the left.

There was no hope now of anything but a running shot. I aimed carefully. The smoke cleared off, the flock dashed on, but—one bok lay prone upon the earth. Bang! went my second barrel, and another bok, leaping into the air, fell, rose, fell again, then rose and ran on.

Mike was now jubilant. The whole internal structure of his mouth was disclosed to view in his satisfaction, as he viewed the prostrate animal. I may add that although we did not find the wounded bok that evening, we found him next day.

With our prize disembowelled and strapped behind Mike's saddle we rode in triumph into camp, a little before sunset, and found most of our companions assembled, busy preparing supper and making other arrangements for camping out

on the veldt—as they call the plain. Some had been successful, some had failed, but a good many springboks had been killed, and all were hearty as crickets and hungry as hyenas.

To kindle fires, boil tea, roast venison steaks, spread blankets on the ground, and otherwise attend to the duties of the bivouac, was now the order of the hour. The moon rose while we were thus engaged, and mingled her pale light with the ruddy blaze of camp-fires. We spoke little and ate much. Then followed the inevitable pipe and the pleasant chat, but we were all too ready for rest to care about keeping it up long. I was constrained to take the bed of honour in the cart. The others stretched their limbs on the Karroo, and in ten minutes every man was in the land of nod.

Next day we mounted at daybreak and renewed the hunt, but I will say no more about it than that we bagged twenty-six springboks amongst us, and that Six-foot Johnny, having killed the greatest number of animals, returned home "King of the hunt," with a scrap of ostrich feather in his cap.

LETTER III.

SOMERSET—THE BRITISH SETTLERS—ORIGINAL "OWNERS"—NATIVE CHURCH-GOING.

On my way to the Karroo I had to pass through Somerset East, and it so fell out that I fell in with a countryman from Edinburgh, who chanced to be going to Somerset in the same "passenger-cart" with myself. His name must have been a novelty once, though much of its freshness is worn off now—it was Brown.

Our cart had a hood; the roads were very bad, and the behaviour of that hood was stupendous! Its attachment to the cart was, so to speak, partial; therefore it possessed a semi-independent motion which was perplexing. You could not count on its actions. A sudden lurch of the cart to right or left did, of course, carry the hood with it, and, counting on that, you laid your sudden plans to avoid collision; but the elasticity of the hood enabled it to give you a slap on the face

before obeying its proper impulse. So, too, it would come down on your head unexpectedly, or, without the slightest provocation, would hit you on the neck behind. I learned with painful certainty in that cart that I had a "small" to my back! It seemed to me that it grew large before the journey was over.

Brown was an intelligent man,—not an unusual state of things with the "Browns." He had two pretty daughters with him, aged eight and twelve respectively. We got on well together, and crossed the Zuurberg range in company on the last day of the year.

It was over passes in this range that the settlers of 1820 went in long trains of Cape-wagons, with wives and little ones, and household goods, and civilised implements of husbandry, and weapons of defence, with high hopes, and strong courage, and with their "lives in their hands," to subdue the wilderness. It was from these heights that they looked over the beautiful and bush-clad plains of "Albany," which lay before them as the lot of their inheritance.

The breaking up and scattering of the various "parties" was most eloquently and graphically told by the Rev. H. H. Dugmore in a lecture de-

livered at Grahamstown, on the occasion of the "British Settlers' Jubilee," in May 1870—fifty years after the arrival of the "fathers."* I quote one passage, which gives a good idea of the manner in which the land was taken up.

"And now the Sunday's River is crossed, and the terrible old Ado Hill is climbed, and Quaggas Flat is passed, and the Bushman's river heights are scaled. The points of divergence are reached, and the long column breaks into divisions. Baillie's party made their way to the mouth of the Fish River, where, it was said, the 'Head' had been allowed to choose a territory, and where he hoped to realise imaginations of commercial wealth by founding a seaport town. And the Duke of Newcastle's protégés from Nottingham took possession of the beautiful vale of Clumber, naming it in honour of their noble patron. And Wilson's party settled between the plains of Waay-plaats, and the Kowie bush, right across the path of the elephants, some of which they tried to shoot with fowling-pieces. And Sefton's party founded the village of Salem, the religious importance of which to the early progress of the

* This deeply interesting lecture was published in Grahamstown as a pamphlet, entitled, *The Reminiscences of an Albany Settler.*

settlement, is not to be estimated by its present size and population. These four were the large parties. The smaller ones filled up the intervening spaces between them. Behind the thicket-clad sandhills of the Kowie and Green Fountain, and extending over the low plains beyond Bathurst, were the locations of Cock's, Thornhill's, Ostler's, Smith's, and Richardson's parties. Skirting the wooded Kloofs from Bathurst towards the banks of the Klienemonden, were ranged the parties of James and Hyman. It was the latter who gravely announced to Captain Trapps, the Bathurst magistrate, the discovery of 'precious stones' on his location; and which the irascible gentleman, jealous of the reserved rights of Government, found, on further inquiry, were only 'precious big ones!' The rich valley of Lushington afforded a resting-place to Dyason's party. Holder's people called their location New Bristol; which never, however, acquired any resemblance to *Old* Bristol. Passing on towards the front, there were Mouncey's party, Hayhurst's party, Bradshaw's party, Southey's party, stretching along the edge of the wide plains of the Round Hill, and drinking their Western waters. The post of honour and of danger was the line of the Kap

River. This was occupied by the party of Scott below Kafir Drift, and by the Irish party above it. The forlorn hope of the entire settlement was Mahoney's party at the clay pits, who had to bear the first brunt of every Kafir depredation in the Lower Albany direction. Names thicken as we proceed from Waay-plaats towards Grahamstown. Passing Greathead's location, we come among the men of Dalgairns at Blauw Krantz. Then those of Liversage about Manly's Flats. John Stanley, 'Head of all Parties,' as he styled himself, belonged to the same neighbourhood. Turvey's party were in Grobblaar's Kloof; William Smith's at Stony Vale, Dr. Clarke's at Collingham. Howard's, Morgan's, and Carlisle's, bring us by successive steps to the neighbourhood of Grahamstown. . . .

"My 'reminiscences' are those of an Albany settler; but I do not forget that there was another party, who, though locally separated from the main body, occupied a position, the importance of which developed itself in the after-history of the settlement. I refer to the Scotch party, who were located on the Baviaan's River, among mountains and glens that have been rendered classic by the poetry of their leader, and historic

by the gallant deeds and indomitable endurance of his compatriots in the after-struggles of the frontier. I need make no particular reference, however, to the early circumstances of that body of men, as in Pringle's *African Sketches* they have a most graphically-written history of their own."

Thus, in 1820, was the land overrun and taken possession of by the "British Settlers." It had once been the land of the Hottentots, but had never at any time rightfully belonged to the Kafirs, who, after wrongfully entering it, and rendering themselves by their thievish propensities and duplicity an unbearable nuisance, were finally driven out of it in 1819.

The idea of Government in sending the settlers out to occupy these vacated lands was, that a convenient buffer might thus be placed on the frontier of the colony to keep the savages in check. That these settlers and their descendants received many a rude shock, and played their part nobly, has been proved, and is admitted on all hands. That they received less encouragement and help from those who induced them to emigrate than might have been expected, is equally certain. But things are on a better footing now —the condition and claims of the colony are

beginning to be better understood and considered by its maternal parent over the sea.

Brown and I chatted, more or less, of these things as we toiled up the slopes of the Zuurberg, where the original settlers had toiled fifty-five years before us, and in the afternoon came to a pretty good inn, where a small misfortune befell us. While we were indulging in a cup of tea, one of our horses escaped. We had crossed the mountain-range by that time, and the truant had a fine range of undulating country to scamper over. That animal gave us some trouble, for, although nearly a dozen men went after him on horseback, he kept dodging about actively with hilarious flourishes of heels and tail during the whole afternoon.

When one is in no hurry, and the weather is fine, a delay of this kind is rather pleasant than otherwise. While men and boys were engaged in the fruitless chase, I wandered off into the bush in the hope of stumbling on a tortoise or a snake, or some other creature that I had previously been accustomed to see in zoological collections, but the reptiles kept close, and refused to show themselves. I came, however, on a gigantic beehive; at least it resembled one in appearance, though

the smoke that issued from a hole in its top suggested humanity. There was also a hole in one side partially covered by a rickety door. Close beside it stood a little black creature which resembled a fat and hairless monkey. It might have been a baboon. The astonished gaze and grin with which it greeted me warranted such an assumption, but when it suddenly turned and bolted through the hole into the beehive, I observed that it had no tail—not even a vestige of such a creation,—and thus discovered that it was a "Tottie," or Hottentot boy. The sublime, the quaint, the miserable, the ridiculous, and the beautiful, were before me in that scene. Let me expound these five "heads" in order.

On my left rose the woody slopes and crags of the Zuurberg, above whose summits the white hills and towers, and gorgeous battlements of cloudland rose into the bright blue sky. Around me were groups of flowering mimosa bushes, with thorns from three to six inches long, interspersed with which were curious aloes, whose weird leafy tops gave them the aspect of shrubs growing upside down with their roots scrambling aimlessly in the air. In front stood the native hut, the wretchedness of whose outside was only equalled

AN "OWNER" OF THE LAND.—PAGE 42.

by the filth and poverty-stricken aspect within. Near to this were several native children, as black as coal, as naked as they were when born, as impudent-looking as tom-tits, and as lively as crickets. Beyond all lay the undulating plains studded with flowering shrubs of varied form and hue, and bathed in golden sunshine.

There is something sad, ay, and something mysterious, to me in the thought that such a lovely land had been, until so recently, the home of the savage and the scene of his bloody and ruthless deeds.

I use the term savage advisedly, because I wish to call things by their right names. A savage *is* a savage, and in my experience among the natives of different parts of the earth I have never met with what is styled the "Noble savage," nor even heard of a genuine specimen, except in cases where individuals have embraced the civilising Gospel. Let me not be misunderstood. I have no sympathy whatever with those who regard "niggers" as an inferior race of ignoble men, who are only fit to be killed or turned into beasts of burden for the benefit of the highly exalted and much self-praised white man,—those selfish scoffers who question the power of God's Word and Spirit to

effect a beneficial change in what they call the "red-Kafir." But, on the other hand, I have little sympathy, and no agreement, with those who, forgetting, apparently, that this red-Kafir is in truth a savage, would treat him as if he were already a Christian and civilised man. To treat him kindly, justly, considerately, lovingly; to try to do him every possible good, and, chiefly, to bring his soul in contact with the Saviour, is our simple duty, but to *trust* him is no part of our duty. It is worse than folly, because it defeats our philanthropic views, and prolongs his debasement. Who would trust a thief, or a liar, or a murderer? The whole Kafir nation, root and branch, is a huge thief, an inveterate liar, and a wholesale murderer. Those who have read of their doings under Chaka, and such like Neros, will surely admit this to be true. The history of our colonial wars clearly shows it. The monstrous, unnatural, and brutal practices which at the present hour form part of the Kafir laws incontestably prove it. Nobility of a kind the Kafir does indeed possess. God has given him a noble frame and physique. None who look at him can deny this. He also possesses a noble brain, as we learn from the reports of the grand Missionary Institu-

tions of Healdtown, Worcester, and Lovedale, where hundreds of native boys and girls are being educated in many of the branches of human knowledge, intellectual as well as industrial, and where they are said to equal, if not to excel, the white pupils.

But the uneducated savage Kafir is an intellectual child—and a very bad child too. He ought to be disarmed to prevent his avowed and inveterate desire, and constantly recurring attempts, to "drive the white man into the sea." He ought to be trained (of course all agree on this point) in the knowledge of God's blessed way of peace with man, and in secular matters also. But he ought to be carefully watched and wisely restrained, until he has become a man of *principle*, which at present he is not. The savage is undoubtedly entitled to the same *laws* as the white man, but not to the same *privileges*. The Kafir is a very infant in everything except physical force and wickedness. To put him on an equality with civilised whites is equivalent to granting, in England, the franchise to boys.

It may be said of those who differ as to Kafir management,—as of all other disputants,—that there are errors on both sides, but from what I have

seen, heard, and read of South Africa, I feel profoundly convinced that if governments, imperial and colonial, could only hit upon and carry out some wise course of native policy, missionaries and schoolmasters would soon progress rapidly with their important part in the grand work of raising the savage to Christianity and civilisation. They have done so in time past in spite of obstacles—witness, among others, the Fingoes, who were created a tribe under our rule by one of the Government's wise strokes of policy. These have been converted by missionaries and schoolmasters into a civilised black people, who have built churches and colleges, and contributed thousands of pounds sterling, since their beginning in 1835, to Christianity and Education.

On New Year's day in 1876 I dined at a table d'hôte in Somerset,—in a strange land with strangers. But the strangers were not shy. Neither was I. There were about a dozen of us at table, and before dinner was half over we were as sociable as if we had been bosom friends from infancy. We even got the length of warm discussion, and I heard some sentiments expressed regarding natives and "native policy," with which I could not agree; but, being ignorant on the

subject at the time, I stuck to general principles. It seemed to me that some of the speakers must have been born with their brains turned the wrong way. This idea recalls to memory the curious fact that, during my first walk in Somerset I saw a mounted Hottentot policeman wearing his helmet with the fore part to the back, because its rear peak was longer, and a better sunshade, than the front.

The same tendency to sacrifice appearance to utility is observable among the Malays of Cape-town, who treat their sou'-westers similarly.

A comrade-in-arms of the Hottentot policeman acted in the capacity of interpreter to the Rev. Mr. Green during his ministrations in the native church of Somerset, and admirably he did it too, —at least so I was told, but as the sermon I heard was delivered by Mr. Green (a Wesleyan) in Dutch, and translated into Kafir, I cannot speak of my own knowledge on the point.

My visit to this native church was on a Sunday, —the hottest Sunday I ever spent. The congregation was entirely black and brown. *It*, also, was hot, so that the church was by no means cool. Whatever depth, or want of depth, there might have been in the Christianity of these people, the

garb and the bearing of civilisation were very obvious and very pleasant to behold. Their behaviour was most orderly and modest, and their equality with whites was clearly demonstrated by the fact, that many of them had gone there to display their finery.

Taking my place near the pulpit I saw them to advantage. The church was pretty full. I sat down beside a very stout Hottentot girl, whose dress of showy chintz was as much a subject of interest to herself as of indifference to the congregation. There were marvellous contrasts and surprising harmonies displayed in that church, with not a few discords. Childlike good-humour sat on every countenance. When Mr. Green ascended the pulpit eager expectancy gleamed in every jet-black eye. When the psalm was given out the preparatory clearing of throats and consequent opening of thick red lips and revelation of splendid rows of teeth all over the church had quite a lighting-up effect on the scene. They sang heartily and well of course,—all black people do so, I think. Just opposite me sat a young man with a countenance so solemn that I felt sure he had made up his mind to "be good," and get the full benefit of the services. His black cheeks

seemed to glisten with earnestness; his thick lips pouted with devotional good-will. I do not write in ridicule, but merely endeavour to convey my full meaning. He wore a superfine black dress coat, a gaudy vest, and buff corduroy trousers so short that they displayed to advantage his enormous bare feet. Beside him was an elderly man with tweed trousers, a white shirt and brown shooting coat, and a face not quite so solemn but very sedate. Some of the men had boots, some had black silk hats, others wideawakes,—which of course they removed on entering. It seemed to me that there was among them every part and variety of costume from morning to evening dress, but no individual could boast of being complete in himself.

As for the women, they were (as in other cases and places) indescribable. Some of them wore little more than a blanket, others were clothed in the height of European fashion,—or something like it,—and all had evidently put on their "Sunday's best." One stout and remarkably healthy young woman appeared in a light-coloured polonaise, a brilliant skirt, and an indescribable hat with ostrich feathers on her woolly head. She sat herself down close beside me and went to sleep

at the beginning of the sermon—not out of irreverence, I am persuaded, but from heat. In this state she continued swaying to and fro to the end of the discourse, occasionally drooping, as though she meant to make a pillow of my shoulder, which she would certainly have done, but for a more modestly clad Hottentot girl at her other side, who, evidently scandalised, kept poking at her continuously with her elbow. In justice to the congregation I am bound to add, that I saw very few sleepers. They were most attentive, and despite the distracting elements of a humorous kind that obtruded themselves, I was much impressed with the earnest way in which these people gazed at the tall, intelligent, black policeman, while he translated the Gospel message into the Kafir tongue.

But it is difficult to avoid sensations of levity when one is placed in such circumstances. During one of my most successful efforts at solemnity I chanced to look across at the pouting young man with the very solemn countenance. He chanced at the same moment to look at me, and observed, evidently for the first time, the stout girl with the polonaise as she made one of her lurches towards my shoulder. Never in my life have I

seen such a brilliant, sparkling change come over a human countenance before. The pursed and pouting mouth expanded from ear to ear; a double row of dazzling teeth appeared suddenly, as if set in an oval ring of red on a field of black, while the eyes dilated till their glittering whites were quite disclosed. I looked away hurriedly and tried to think of other things. There was an elderly Fingoe near. I fixed my attention on him and became interested, for his prolonged stare at the minister was, I felt, too intense to be genuine. The sudden collapse of his eyelids and drop of his head,—followed by a little cough and a hypocritical look of earnestness,—proved that I was right.

At the close of the service an old Kafir woman came forward to be baptized. It was an interesting sight, and brought forcibly to remembrance the only other case of adult baptism I had witnessed, namely, that of a red Indian woman, who near Lake Winipeg in Rupert's Land, many years before, was admitted into the visible church by a Wesleyan minister.

The baptism of a black baby, which followed, irresistibly brought back the ludicrous, for that creature had its little woolly, and I fear dirty, head imbedded in a regal blue velvet robe lined

with quilted white satin! It is well for poor humanity that the "outward appearance" is not regarded on high.

To write seriously on the work done at this mission would be inappropriate, because I had not sufficient opportunity to inquire into, or examine, the method by which it is sought to elevate these natives. In regard to them, and missionary effort at the Cape generally, the only point on which I have no doubt whatever is the fact that the blessed Gospel of Christ is preached.

Somerset East is a pretty town on the Little Fish River, at the foot of the Boschberg mountains, which rise abruptly from the plain. It boasts of two banks, a newspaper, several churches, and the Gill College,—an imposing edifice which was erected by private endowment. Its population is above eighteen hundred, in regard to whom all I can say is, that the few members I had the pleasure of meeting there during a three days' sojourn were exceedingly hospitable and kind.

LETTER IV.

ADVENTURES WITH OSTRICHES.

Ostrich farming is no child's-play. It involves risk in more ways than one, and sometimes taxes both the courage and strength of the farmer.

In ordinary circumstances the ostrich is a mild inoffensive creature—indeed the female is always so; but when a male ostrich is what I may style nesting—when, enclosed in a large field or paddock, he guards his wives and his eggs—no lion of the desert, no tiger of the jungle or kloof, is more ferocious or more savagely bent on the death of any or all who dare to intrude on his domain.

The power of the ostrich, too, is quite equal to his strength of will. He stands from seven to nine feet in height, and is very heavy.

His tremendous legs are his only weapons, and his kick is almost, if not quite, equal to that of a horse. Possessing enormous feet, with two toes on each, the horny points of which can cut and rip

like cold chisels, he rushes at an adversary and kicks, or hits-out, straightforward, like a prize-fighter. No unarmed man on earth could stand long before a furious male ostrich without being killed. But there are one or two weak points about him, which abate somewhat the danger of his attack. In the first place his power lies only in his mighty legs, the thighs of which—blue-grey and destitute of feathers—are like two shoulders of mutton. With his beak he can do nothing, and his long neck is so weak that if you can only lay hold of it and pull his head to the ground you are comparatively safe, for he cannot kick effectively in that position, and devotes all his energies, when thus caught, to useless attempts to pull his head out of your grasp. But, then, how are you to get hold of that neck—the root of which stands nearly as high as your own head—in the face of two claws that go like battering-rams wrought by lightning? As well might you attempt to lay hold of a prize-fighter's nose while his active fists are darting out at you.

A powerful, active man has been known, when attacked while unarmed, to spring on the bird, grasp a wing with one arm and the body with the other, and hug it, but there is great danger in

this method, because in the attempt you are pretty sure to receive at least one kick, and that, if it takes effect, will be quite sufficient to put you *hors de combat*. It also requires much power of endurance, for, hugging a creature that is strong enough to dance about and lift you off your legs in its wild efforts to get rid of you, must be hard work. Supposing that you do succeed, however, in holding on until you work your way along to the neck and get the head into custody, then you can without much difficulty choke the bird, but a male ostrich costs from £100 to £150, and one hesitates to choke £150, even for the sake of one's life, especially when the valuable bird belongs to one's friend.

Another and perhaps the best plan, if you are caught unarmed, is to lie down. An ostrich cannot kick you when you lie flat on the ground, he can only dance on you, and although that process is unpleasant it is not necessarily fatal.

The ostrich is easily killed by a blow on the neck with a stout stick, but this is as objectionable as the choking process, on the ground of cost. In short, the only legitimate method of meeting a savage papa, in his own field, is with a strong forked pole eight or nine feet long, with which

you catch the bird at the root of the neck, and thus keeping him at pole's-length, let him kick and hiss away to his heart's content till he is tired, or until assistance comes to you, or until you work him near a wall, when you may jump over and escape, for an ostrich will not jump.

Often have I gone, thus armed, with my friend Hobson to feed the nesting ostriches. The risk of attack, I may mention in passing, is not great when two men go together, because the bird seems undecided which foe to attack, and generally ends by condescending to pick at the mealies (Indian corn) which are thrown down to him.

One morning Hobson and his eldest son Six-foot Johnny and I mounted our steeds and rode away to the field in which one of the male ostriches dwelt with his meek brown wives. The wives are always brown, the husbands are jet black, with the exception of those magnificent and pure white feathers in wings and tail which are so much prized and worn by the fair dames of Europe. Hobson carried a sack of mealies at his saddle-bow.

There were several male birds on the farm, all of which were distinguished by name. There were "Master," and "David Marais," and "Black

Jack," and "Blind-boy" (minus one eye!) and "Gouws," etc. Our visit that morning was to David Marais. David was by far the fiercest of the lot, but he was excessively fond of mealies, and could be attracted—though by no means appeased—by these.

"Johnny," said Hobson, as we cantered along by the side of the little stream which caused a strip of bright fertility to wind like a green snake over the brown Karroo, and which was, as it were, the lifeblood of the farm, "Johnny, I want you to go to the nest and count the eggs, while I keep David in play."

"Very well, father."

The order, and the quiet acceptance of it, did not seem to involve much, yet Johnny had been ordered on somewhat dangerous service that morning, for David Marais was intensely watchful as well as savage. Several of the other males, although capable of giving way to temper, were so far amiable that my friend and I had frequently gone into their enclosures with our forked sticks and mealies, and had received no worse at their hands than a threatening attitude or a suspicious look, which passed away when the food was thrown down; but David's temper was such that

we never ventured into his paddock, contenting ourselves by throwing the mealies over the hedge or wall that bounded the field. This field, or enclosure, by the way, was not a small piece of ground which one could take in at a glance. It was more than a mile in extent, undulating in form, with a stream bisecting it, and mimosa bushes scattered here and there, so that from any one point you could not see the entire field, or ascertain its exact form or size. Sometimes, on going into such a field, one has to look about for the birds—also to "look out" for them, as they are prone to sudden assault!

But David Marais required no looking for. His large eagle-eye had detected us from afar, and we found him at the nearest extremity of the nearest angle of his grounds ready to give us battle, pacing slowly to and fro, with that peculiar motion of the wings which indicates suppressed wrath.

We rode along close to his hedge a short distance, and he marched with us, brushing against the hedge and showing an anxious desire to get at us. If there had been a gap in that hedge he would have charged like a thunderbolt, but there was no gap, and it is a strange fact that an ostrich cannot leap—at least he *will* not. The

merest trifle of an obstruction—a bit of wall or hedge over which he could *step* with perfect ease —is sufficient to check his advance and keep him in; that is, if he *walks* up to it, but he is a stupid bird, and if he *runs* up to such an obstruction he may *tumble* over it, gather himself up on the other side, and so continue the charge.

On reaching a part of the hedge which dipped into a hollow, Hobson dismounted and opened the sack with the peace-offering. The bird, after breasting up to the hedge and finding it impassable, sat down on what may be styled his elbows, scraped his wings on the ground, and rolled his head and neck about in a fashion that is indescribable. This, I was told, was his method of rousing himself, or of relieving his feelings. It looked more like making a fool of himself. A handful of mealies seemed to irritate him at first, but by degrees the temptation became too strong. He commenced to pick a few seeds—ready, however, on the smallest provocation, to forsake them, charge up to the hedge, and hiss at us.

"Now, Johnny, I 'll keep him in play," said Hobson senior. "You go round to the nest. Keep well down in the hollows, else he 'll be sure to see you."

Johnny at once rode off. The suspicious David looked after him and showed a tendency to retire in the direction of his nest, but Hobson raised his forked stick over the hedge and made a demonstration therewith. This was more than enough.

Inflated with rage David at once accepted the challenge, and rushed back to the hedge, over which another handful of mealies were thrown at him, but mealies had lost much of their power by that time. Thus, with alternate taunt and temptation was the false attack maintained by the father, while the real attack was made by the son, at the other extremity of the fortress.

I followed the real attack. We did not go direct. The bird would at once have made for its nest had we done so. We rode off in the direction in which we had come until out of sight, and then, making a long circuit at full gallop, came round to the other end of the enclosure, from which point the enemy could not be seen.

There was a wall to cross, then a deep hollow through which the little stream ran, then a belt of pretty thick bushes, beyond which, on the open plain, the nest was known to lie—if I may call that a nest which is a mere hollow in the sand, in which the eggs are laid. Here the female sits

all day while the male marches about *en garde*. At night the male sits while the female goes about and feeds. They are most attentive parents, and there is a fitness in this arrangement as regards colour, for the brown female squatted on the brown Karroo is almost invisible in daylight, while the black male is equally invisible during the darkness of the night.

"You mustn't come with me," said Johnny, dismounting; "it would only increase the chance of my being seen by David."

I was detailed, therefore, to the inglorious duty of holding the horses, while my young friend made the assault alone.

He leaped the wall, descended into the bed of the stream, scrambled up the opposite bank, crossed the clump of small wood, and came out into the open. Now a short piece of this open—fifty yards or so, perhaps—was visible from the lower end of the field, where Hobson and David were still coquetting with each other. Johnny tried to skulk over this open ground. He might as well have sought to evade the eyes of Argus. The long-sighted bird caught the very first glint of his cap. Insult and mealies were alike unavailing now. He forsook the sire and made at the

son with his great compass-like legs, covering the ground in tremendous as well as rapid strides. No race-horse ever cleared the ground like David Marais! Johnny saw that the "game was up." Applying his own long legs to the ground with a will, he rushed at the nest. The female bounced up, ran a few yards, and squatted in helpless stupidity. Johnny counted the eggs, turned, and fled. Not a moment too soon! Indeed he was too late, for the ostrich was already close up, and Johnny's retreat by the way he had come was cut off; but he turned at a sharp angle, and made for another clump of bushes, through which he plunged with a wild hilarious laugh, into the safe retreat of the river-bed. David Marais could not follow there, but he doubtless consoled himself with the reflection that he had gallantly defended his wife and little ones, and had beaten the enemy from the field!

Nothing of all this had I seen, for the belt of bushes hid the actors from view, but I heard the ringing laugh with rather anxious surprise, and saw Johnny emerge immediately after from the banks of the stream, flushed and panting from his adventure.

That I do not exaggerate the power and ferocity

of these birds, may be gathered from an incident which occurred to Hobson himself, and which he related on our way home.

One morning he rode to the enclosure of the bird named "Master," and entered, intending to feed him and his wife with mealies. "Master" must have risen off his wrong side that morning, for, instead of amiably accepting his breakfast, he made a sudden and furious rush at his benefactor. Hobson's horse wheeled round and bolted,—no wonder, with the claw of an ostrich acting as a spur on his flank! The horse was so frightened that he fairly ran away. "Master" ran after him, and, being much fleeter, kept on kicking his legs and flanks, so that they were soon covered with blood, and once he kicked so high as to cut the crupper. The horse became almost mad with terror, and quite ungovernable. It was chased round and round the place, the walls being too high to leap, and the gate having been closed. At last the horse dashed madly into a mimosa bush, and stuck fast. The impetuous "Master" followed, but, before he could back out, Hobson caught him by the throat in his powerful grasp. He held on until Master choked. Not wishing to kill the bird, he then let go, and Master dropt

like a stone. Hobson then galloped to the river, but Master, who recovered immediately, came rushing on to renew the attack. Hobson, however, had found shelter and safety behind some bushes in the bed of the stream.

Not long after our visit to David Marais, I went with Six-foot Johnny to the territory which belonged to Blind-boy. That sagacious bird was not so blind but that, with his one eye, he observed us coming, and met us more than half-way. Knowing him to be, comparatively, a peaceable bird, and being mounted, we entered the enclosure and rode towards him. From certain symptoms and rufflings of the feathers and cockings of the tail, however, my companion knew that Blind-boy was not as amiable as might have been wished.

"Take care," said Johnny.

"Why?" said I.

"Because he's angry."

The signs of wrath did not appear to me very obvious, but I afterwards came to understand that, in an ostrich, a small amount of demonstration means unfathomable depths of ire.

We rode slowly forward. Blind-boy advanced as slowly, with a dangerous motion of the wings.

"Keep on this side of the ditch," said Johnny. "Now, then, we 'd better be off."

Before I well understood that it was advisable to get out of the bird's way, my companion had put spurs to his horse, and was off like an arrow. Or ever I was aware what my horse meant to do, I was almost thrown to the ground. He pirouetted on his hind-legs—without orders,—and went off like the wind. Nothing but a natural tendency to hold tight with my knees prevented me from being left beside Blindboy. We went at racing speed to the gate, and then found, on looking back, that we might have spared ourselves the rush, for Blindboy was standing as we left him! The ditch had proved an impassable barrier, and he was gazing after us in apparent wonder at our haste. My own wonder at the smart behaviour of my horse was removed when Johnny told me that it was the identical steed his father had ridden when attacked, as I have described, by Master.

Johnny himself was once assaulted, trampled on, and severely cut about the head, by one of these same ostriches, and might have been killed if his father had not chanced to be at hand. Johnny was younger at the time, and, in the foolish ardour of youth, attempted to rise when

knocked down. This gave the ostrich the opportunity of once and again repeating his blows. If the lad had lain still he would have suffered less. I might draw a beautiful moral on submission and humility out of this, but won't.

Strange to say, the male ostrich loses nearly all his courage when out of his own proper paddock or domain. This was illustrated to me one morning in the case of Gouws. We were walking by the side of his enclosure, and he was advancing to meet us in his own belligerent style, when we observed that the gate was open. Before we could get near to close it Gouws marched through. If we had entered his grounds an attack would have been highly probable, but no sooner did he find himself outside the accustomed wall than the spirit in him changed. He looked confusedly round at the unfamiliar objects, then dropped his defiant tail, and fled.

It cost us the better part of a forenoon, with temperature at 105° in the shade, before we succeeded in driving that bird back into his own paddock, and all that time he was running away from us, overwhelmed, apparently, with fear!

LETTER V.

MORE ABOUT OSTRICHES—KARROO GARDENS—A RIDE WITH BONNY—SKETCHING UNDER DIFFICULTIES—ANECDOTES AND INCIDENTS.

Ah, these were happy days, when, with a congenial spirit, I drove and galloped over the South African plains. There was not much in the way of thrilling incidents, to be sure, and nothing whatever of wild adventure, but there was novelty in everything, and possibilities enough to keep the spirit ever on the *qui vive.*

We used to ride out sometimes after steenboks,—small harmless brown deer, that made little show when bagged, but then there were huge and horrid vultures to remind one of the sandy desert, and there were pauws—gigantic birds that were splendid eating; and the very thought that I trod on land which little more than quarter of a century back *had* been marked by the print of the royal lion was in itself sufficient to arouse

unwonted interest, which was increased by the knowledge of the fact that the kloofs or glens and gorges, of the blue hills on the horizon were at that time the natural homes of leopards or "Cape-tigers" and huge baboons.

These animals are, however, extremely wary. The baboons go about in troops, and are wont to leave a trusty old-man baboon on guard, while the rest go down at early morn to rob the settler of his fruits and vegetables. If the old man happens to see or scent danger he gives a signal and the troop flies helter-skelter to the nearest cliffs. They are therefore not easily got at by hunters. As to "tigers," they go about stealthily like cats. I was told there was not a chance of getting a shot at them, unless I went out with dogs and a hunting party for the purpose. As this could not be accomplished at the time, I had to content myself with smaller game.

Bonny (one of Hobson's younger sons) and I went out one day after breakfast to try for a steenbok before dinner. There were plenty of them in the stretches of bush-land that dotted the Karroo in the immediate neighbourhood of the farm-house.

Stretching out at a gallop with that light-

hearted hilarity which is engendered by bright weather, fresh air, and equestration, we skirted the river where Hreikie nursed her little flock.

Hreikie was a small Hottentot girl, as lightly clad as was compatible with propriety. Her face was dirty brown, her mouth large, her nose a shapeless elevation with two holes in the front of it. Her head was not covered, but merely sprinkled with tight woolly knobs or curls the size of peas. Each knob grew apart from its neighbour knob, and was surrounded, so to speak, by bald or desert land. This style of hair was not peculiar to Hreikie alone, but to the whole Hottentot race. Hreikie's family consisted of thirty-three young ostriches, which, though only a few weeks of age, stood, I think, upwards of two feet high. Some of them had been brought out by artificial incubation—had been heated, as it were, into existence without maternal aid. These birds, Bonny said, had been already purchased for £15 sterling apiece, and were deliverable to the purchaser in six months. They were fed and guarded all day and housed each evening with tender solicitude by their Hottentot stepmother, whom the birds evidently regarded as their own natural parent.

We swept on past the garden, where, on a previous morning, Bonny and I had killed a deadly green-tree snake upwards of five feet long, and where, on many other mornings, he and I, with sometimes other members of the family entered into strong temptation among the magnificent fruit. We used to overcome the temptation by giving way to it! There were plums, peaches, figs, apples, apricots, grapes, nectarines, and other fruits, with which the trees were so laden that some of the branches had given way and their luscious loads were lying on the ground. Cart-loads of these were given away to friends, and to any one, as there was no market for their disposal.

Many splendid gardens like this exist on what is sometimes styled the barren Karroo; but the land is anything but barren. All it requires is a copious supply of water, and wherever farmers have taken the trouble to form dams and store the heavy though unfrequent rains, gardens of the most prolific kind have been the result. The Karroo bush itself, which gives name to these plains, is a succulent plant, which thrives in the almost waterless soil, and forms a rich pasturage for sheep and cattle. Hobson's garden—copiously watered by streams led out from his large dams

—was a beautiful shady oasis of green and gold, in the midst of what, to some eyes, might have appeared a desert, but which, if irrigated properly, would become a perfect paradise of fertility.

We cantered on over the plain, till the garden and the farm looked in the distance like ships at sea, and rode among the bushes that crowned a rising ground. We set up some guinea-fowl and other birds, and startled a hare, but let them go, as our aim was steenboks. The little deer, however, were not on the knoll that day, so away we went again at a gallop until the garden and the farm went down on the horizon.

Sometimes we kept together and chatted, at other times we diverged and skirted small clumps of underwood on opposite sides. At one time, while separated from Bonny, I saw a large stone lying on the ground. As I looked, the stone began to crawl! It was a tortoise, fully as large as a soup-tureen. The sight of an animal in its "native wilds," which you have all your life been accustomed to see in zoological gardens, has something peculiar, almost absurd, in it. As it is with animals, so is it with other objects. I remember being impressed with this idea, for the first time, in the south of France, when I beheld a tree

covered with lemons—a fruit which, up to that period, had been indissolubly connected in my mind with grocers' windows and brown sugar!

I turned aside and dismounted. The sluggish tortoise stopped, recognised in me an enemy, and drew in its head and feet. After lifting and looking at him I set him down. Then it occurred to me that some one had said a tortoise could carry a man. I stepped upon this one's back forthwith. He lay perfectly still for some time. At last with great caution the head and feet were protruded. Another pause, as if of meditation, then the feet were applied to the ground; they pushed and strained, until finally the creature advanced about two inches, and then stopped! This was not much, but it was sufficient to prove his great strength, and to convince me that a large tortoise could easily have walked off with a little boy.

I found Bonny dismounted and waiting.

"No steenboks to-day, I fear," he said.

"We must have a shot at something, Bonny," said I, dismounting, and sitting down on an ant-hill. Having been a fair average shot in a rifle corps in Scotland I took careful aim at a small bush, bent on doing credit to the British Volunteers. The result was a "bull's-eye."

"Capital!" exclaimed Bonny; "if you shoot like that you 'll kill plenty deer."

Half an hour later I was passing round the left of a knoll, while Bonny took the right. Up leaped a steenbok, which ran a hundred yards or so, and stopped to look at me. I was already off the horse and down in the Hythe position. A careful aim was again taken. The result was "a miss"! while the small deer vanished like the smoke of my rifle. So great is the difference between target-practice and hunting!

It was time now to think of returning for dinner. I was thoroughly lost by that time in the vast plain—like a ship at sea without a compass. But Bonny was as knowing in Karroo-craft as a Kentucky hunter is in wood-craft. He steered as true a course for "home" as if he had smelt the leg of mutton that was roasting at the fire. Probably he did—in imagination! Soon the two ships reappeared on the horizon; our fleet nags quickly transformed them into the garden and the farm, and in half an hour we were relating our mild adventure round Hobson's hospitable board.

"I 'm going to visit brother Jonathan after dinner: will you come?" said my host.

"Yes, with pleasure," said I, "but first, while you have your siesta, I will go into the opposite field and make that long-talked-of sketch of your house."

"Very good; I'll send for you when the cart is ready. There are some ostriches in the field, but you don't need to mind them, for they are quite young, although full-grown."

It is a common custom among South Africans to take a nap in the heat of the day during summer. They dine early, and the power of the sun at that part of the day renders work almost impossible. I could not at first fall in with this custom; therefore, while the family retired, I took my sketch-book and colours and went off to the field.

There was a mound, whence I could obtain a good view of the house with its surroundings, the cattle-kraal or enclosure, the course of the little stream, with one of the small dams or lakelets, and the garden, the whole backed by the blue mountain range on the horizon.

The sun was blazing fiercely, but, as before remarked, I delight in heat. Selecting a stone I sat down, opened my book and colour-box, and began. To those who don't know it I may

say that sketching is a most fascinating and engrossing species of work. I soon forgot where I was, forgot Hobson, forgot time, forgot everything in fact except the glowing face of nature, when a sound recalled me. I looked round and observed eight or ten huge ostriches stalking towards me with slow funereal gait. I felt somewhat uneasy,—for their youth, of which Hobson had assured me, was in no way indicated by their huge bodies and dreadful legs. However, I had taken the precaution to carry my forked stick, and drawing it nearer continued at my work with an easier mind. If they meant war I knew escape to be hopeless, for the nearest wall was a quarter of a mile off.

The females halted at a respectful distance, but two of the largest black males came stalking close up to me and stood still, gazing intently, first with one eye, then with the other, at a distance of about six yards.

Meanwhile some of the females sat down, and one of them put herself in an attitude so absurd that I introduced her into the drawing. Presently the largest male advanced a little nearer, and kept somewhat behind me. This was embarrassing. It occurred to me that, in the art of war, an

attacking party is supposed to have the advantage of one that is assaulted. I therefore rose, brought my fork to the charge, and went at the bird with a furious roar. It turned and ran a few yards, but stopped when I stopped, and began to return slowly, as before, the moment I had sat down. As it drew nearer I observed that it eyed my colour-box curiously. Stories about the peculiar taste of these giant birds recurred to me. People say they will eat anything. Their digestive powers have passed into a proverb. The day before I had given an ostrich a large apple, which it coolly bolted, and I could trace the progress of the apple by the lump in its throat as it passed rather slowly down. Some one—Bonny I rather think—had told me he had seen an ostrich accept and swallow a bottle of shoe-blacking! Anything bright is sure to attract the eye of an ostrich and be coveted. I trembled for my colour-box, and, seizing my fork, charged again.

About this time Bonny himself came to say that the cart was ready. We therefore packed up and came away. The ostriches, he said, were too young to think of molesting us, though he admitted that they would probably have swallowed the colour-box if I had allowed them. They

SKETCHING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.—PAGE 76.

followed us down to the gate, and finally saw us safely off their premises.

"Father once had an ostrich," said Bonny, as we walked towards the house, "that caught a couple of thieves for him."

"Indeed! how was that, Bonny?"

"You are aware that Kafirs are terrible thieves?" he replied.

"Yes, I've been given to understand that they have propensities that way."

"Oh! but you have no idea how clever they are at it, and the Totties are just as bad, if not worse. On one occasion we had a nest of eggs in the field over there, which we had left to be hatched in the natural way by the hen-ostrich. One night it rained very hard—so hard that we feared the young ones would be drowned in the nest, so brother Johnny was sent to look after them. He took two Totties with him. It was very dark, but he found the nest with the cock bird sitting on it. You know the cock always sits at night. Well, Johnny took him by the nose and pulled him off the nest, and gave him to the two Totties to hold. It was hard work, but they kept his head well down, so that he couldn't kick. Johnny soon bagged all the little ones, leaped over the wall, and then

called out to let go the cock. It was so dark that he couldn't see very well. He could only hear a scuffle, and then saw the two men bounding over the wall like indiarubber balls while the cock went bang against it like a battering-ram. We got the little ones home all safe, but, would you believe it? these rascally Totties had managed to pull out all the best wing-feathers while they were holding the cock—each feather worth, perhaps, fifteen or twenty shillings—and got clear away with 'em to the canteen, where they can always sell stolen goods.

"But that's not what I was going to tell you," continued Bonny. "It was about two Kafir thieves who were going round the country stealing. They came to our place one evening, and, in the course of their depredations, happened to cross one of the fields where a pair of our ostriches had a nest. The cock had not yet commenced his night duty on the nest. He caught sight of the two Kafirs, and was down on them instantly like lightning. They took refuge in a mimosa-thorn, and there he kept them all night. It was no use their trying to make a bolt for it, because twice or three times their speed could not have saved them from the ostrich.

There they remained, and there father found 'em next morning, when he rode out to feed the birds."

The sturdy sons of this Karroo farmer had no light duty to perform each day. The farm was twenty miles in length, and of variable breadth. There were no crops raised on it, save the fruit of the splendid garden already mentioned, some grapes, and a few mealies. The sources of gain were ostriches and their feathers, Angora goat hair (mohair), horses, sheep-wool, and cattle, looking after which kept father and sons pretty constantly in the saddle. It was a dashing style of life, requiring robust health and spirits. I have seen one or both of the boys return of an evening—after having been up at five or six, and out all day,—scarce able to decide whether to eat or sleep! Counting and guarding the flocks formed a part of the duty.

One evening the report was brought that a horse and thirteen bucks had disappeared. The Kafir thief had driven them off in the direction of Somerset. There he had been questioned closely as to where he came from, etc. His replies not being satisfactory, the animals were seized and put in the pound, whence they were after-

wards reclaimed, while the thief escaped being put in the "tronk," or jail, by a sudden dart into the jungle of the Boshberg!

My friend and I were soon on the road which led to the farm of his brother Jonathan. It stood about two miles distant. On our way we had to pass one corner of the private domain of Black Jack, or David Marais, I forget which—I think it was the former. He was there ready for us, and evidently in a rage at the mere possibility of our intrusion, for the wings were going like flails and the tail was up. Hobson pulled up to look at him for a minute. I got down and went to the wall, knowing that it afforded perfect security. Black Jack came up slowly, as if he meant no mischief. I leant over the wall, which was breast-high, and poked fun at him. In an instant, like a flash of light, he came at me. I saw his great claw over my head, and almost before I could jump back, a couple of heavy stones were driven violently off the top of the wall. To bolt and jump into the cart was almost an involuntary and instantaneous impulse on my part, though there was no need for haste, because the furious biped could not leap the wall.

"Yes," remarked my friend, with a quiet chuckle,

as we drove along; "I expected as much. Black Jack is in a bad humour to-day."

The farm of Jonathan lay at the side of the stream which watered that of his brother. It was a pretty place. We drove through the stream to get to the house. On entering we found Jonathan standing in his hall, besprinkled with his own blood, and smiling. He was one of those tall, thin, powerful sort of men, with genial good-humour wrinkling the corners of their eyes, who seem to be ready to smile at everything, pleasant or otherwise, that befalls them.

"Hallo! what 's wrong, Jonathan?" asked his brother, with a touch of tenderness in his tone.

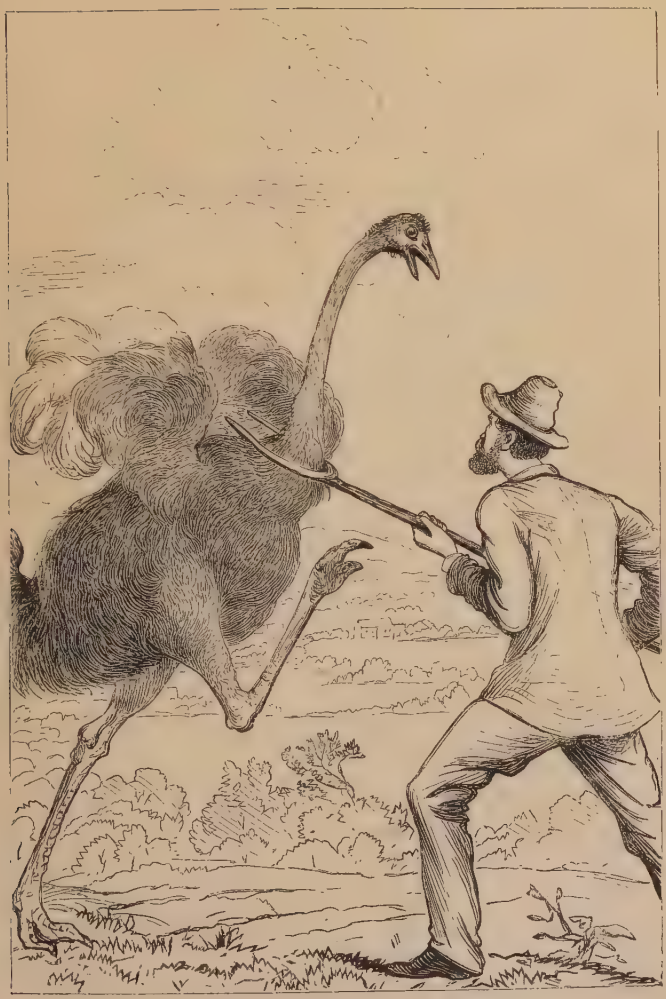
"Nothing particular," replied the other; "I 've just had a tussle with one of my birds. He wriggled out of the stick and kicked me."

On more particular inquiry we found that Jonathan and his son—another powerful six-footer—had gone that morning to search for eggs, which they felt sure must have been laid somewhere about the enclosed field. To keep the male bird in play while the search was being made, the father took his forked stick, met the cock in single combat, clapped the fork on his neck, and let him kick

away. All might have gone well, for the father, besides being strong, was accustomed to such work; but the bird, instead of keeping up a straightforward assault, as it ought to have done, turned its back to its foe, wriggled its neck, in some inexplicable manner, out of the fork, and before it could be refixed had given Jonathan several tremendous kicks. One of these nearly tore his trousers to pieces, and another cut him across the right wrist in to the bone. This rendered his right arm powerless for the moment, and it might have gone ill with him, had not his son, who was still in sight, observed what had occurred, and run back to the rescue. As it was, the father's wrist was severely, though I hope not permanently, damaged.

On a certain occasion three friends visited Ebenezer. One of these—we shall call him Squib—was a sporting character, and anxious to have a shot at the guinea-fowl which abounded on the farm. Hobson, with characteristic amiableness, readily agreed to pilot him and his friends.

"The ground, however," said Hobson, "is part of the domain which belongs to one of my ostriches, whose temper is uncertain. I don't feel sure of him. Perhaps it would be better—"



JONATHAN HOBSON'S FIGHT WITH AN OSTRICH.—Page 82.

"Oh! never mind that," interrupted Squib; "we 're not afraid of ostriches. Come along."

"Very well," returned the host, "come along."

And along they went to the domain of Gouws, who was found pacing solemnly inside the wall of his enclosure. His wings were active, and his tail was cocked. Otherwise he was calm enough to all appearance. Hobson knew that the bird was in a rage, and said so, but his friends, who were young and reckless, insisted on entering the enclosure.

They did so, and Gouws followed them with a stately air, but did not attack, being no doubt perplexed by numbers.

They walked in Indian file, Hobson being the last of the line.

"I could turn him with a bit of a bush," said Squib, glancing at Gouws, who was drawing gradually nearer to the party. "Just cut one for me, Hobson, will you, like a good fellow?"

Hobson turned aside and stooped to cut a branch from a mimosa-bush.

Just then the ostrich, which had marched ahead of the party, turned sharp round and charged. Poor Squib tripped, by good luck, and fell as the bird passed over him. It kicked down

the other two, and sprang on the shoulders of the stooping Hobson, who fell and gashed his finger as the bird tumbled over him.

The whole party rose with marvellous celerity, and the sportsmen rushed towards the boundary wall, while Gouws scrambled on his long legs and ran after them. Had the distance been great, their chance of escape would have been small. As it was, Gouws overtook one of the party just as he reached a part of the wall which had been mended with mimosa-thorn bushes. With one tremendous kick he sent the unfortunate man into the midst of the thorns, where he would certainly have given him further punishment had he not been attracted by a yell of alarm from another of the party. Poor Squib was not fleet of foot or active. He made a clumsy attempt to vault the wall, which his companions had already leaped. Leaving his thorn-pierced victim, Gouws made at Squib, applied his huge foot to his person, with a slap that must have forcibly recalled the days of childhood, and sent him over the wall with undignified haste. It is generally believed that Squib has not gone guinea-fowl shooting among ostriches since that day!

The profits on ostrich feathers are very consider-

able. I do not profess to give statistical information in these pages, but merely touch lightly on what came under my observation. At one farm which I visited near Capetown I was told that the owner had cleared £2500 in one year. Timid men are sometimes alarmed by depressions in the trade in feathers, and some of them have sold off their birds at heavy loss this year; but bold and hopeful men continue to persevere and prosper, as such men always will in every trade all the world over. That ostrich-farming has been found worthy of zealous attention is proved by the fact that, while in 1865 there were only between eighty and ninety birds in the colony, in 1875 there were upwards of 22,000.

Some days afterwards, I pretty well completed my circle of knowledge on this subject by witnessing the birth of an ostrich!

Hobson and I rode that day over to a lovely place named Glenbonny, on the edge of that part of the Karroo where the mountainous lands begin. It was a charming ride of forty miles—there and back—with a pleasant visit, and a rest between. Here dwelt relatives of my friend—a family named Berrington—one daughter of which (with wealth of golden hair) had been a shipmate on

the voyage out. The principal neighbours of this family were tigers and baboons. There was a minor population of deer, hyenas, hares, coneys, monkeys, and moles, but no human beings of any kind. Their dwelling was low and flat-roofed, the walls being coated with mud, so that its aspect outside was not imposing, but inside we found substantial comfort if not luxury, refinement, and hospitality. This is not an infrequent combination in the outlying districts of the Cape, where the nature of life and things is such that wealth, education, and refinement are often found robed in a modest homespun garb, and housed in a mere hut.

Among other objects of interest inside we found ostriches—very little ones—in divers stages of progression. There was one, the size of an ordinary fowl, which had been in existence—after egg-life I mean—a few days, and swaggered about the premises with the overbearing impudence of precocious childhood. There was another baby—weak in the understanding, physically as well as mentally—which staggered about in a drunken manner, with an insane tendency to use its tail as a support. This creature was kept in existence by having its food forcibly crammed

down its throat, the amount given each meal being gauged not by appetite but by the tension of its stomach. Last, and least, there was one which had succeeded in bursting out one end of its native egg that morning. Its already tremendous toes protruded, and were engaged in further acts of demolition when we arrived. While we were at dinner that day the creature effected its liberation, and entered on the staggering and stuffing phase of its career.

All these birds, and many others, had been nursed into life through a hot-air and warm-blanket incubator, by the amiable lady of the house, and were destined to spend a chequered boy and girl-hood under the care of some Hottentot stepmother.

LETTER VI.

OVER THE PLAINS—LION AND TIGER REMINISCENCES—FRONTIER FORCES AND ESCAPED CONVICTS—MONKEYS AND PRICKLY PEARS—A VETERAN SETTLER'S EXPERIENCES OF KAFIR WARFARE—STORY OF THE DUTCH FARMERS' RISING IN 1815.

It was a sad day that on which I left the Karroo and bade farewell to Ebenezer.

I had gone there in absolute ignorance of men and things, and had found a hearty welcome in the abode of a warm-hearted Christian family and a romantic region, full, to me, of new ideas, experiences, circumstances, and sensations.

Hobson drove me in his cart. Our destination was the mountain region of Baviaans, or Baboons, River.

The first part of our route lay across the Karroo and over the mountain range which separated us from the town of Somerset East. As we sped along, drawn by two powerful horses, over the ocean-like plains, we were silent at first, but

OUTSPANNED ON THE KARROO.—Page 89.

gradually the cheering influence of rapid motion and fine weather began to tell. Our spirits rose, and Hobson related numerous anecdotes, historical and adventurous, from the rich stores of a good memory.

About noon we outspanned beside a stream and allowed the horses to have a roll. Under the shade of a bush, we lay and chatted while our eyes roamed over the rolling plains to the blue mountain range which formed its northern boundary.

"There," said my friend, pointing towards the mountains, "is the spot where one of the last lions was seen in this part of the country. There were plenty of them here once, and the last one disappeared only thirty-six years ago."

He then related the incident connected with the lion referred to. The following is the substance of it.

Early in the year 1840 a runaway soldier was travelling through that part of the country. He was on his way to Graaff-Reinet in search of work. At the present time in that region farm-houses are few and far between. At that time they were still more sparse. The wearied soldier came one evening to the house of a Boer named Smit, not

many miles from the spot where Hobson and I were reposing.

Smit was a surly fellow, and refused shelter to the traveller, who was therefore obliged to continue his journey during the night. Next day the unfortunate man's mangled body was found not far off, a few yards from the foot of a small tree. The traces revealed clearly that he had been killed by a lion, whose footprints had been seen and voice heard for some time in the neighbourhood. On the approach of the lion the man had sought refuge in the small tree just mentioned, but being little better than a large bush, it failed him in the hour of need. Even when perched on the highest branch that would bear him, he was not beyond the spring of the lion. It had caught him, torn him down and devoured his breast and arms, after which it left him.

This was the last lion in that region that succeeded in taking human life. Six months later the last lion of all made his appearance. He was evidently a less ferocious animal, and made his final exit in a rather humorous manner. In his prowling about he chanced to find an old Dutchman, and pounced upon him, but the old man had his wits about him. At first sight of his enemy

he let himself go limp as if dead. Lions are particular. They don't like dead meals; they prefer to kill their own dinners. After pouncing on his prey the lion put his mouth to the old fellow's ear and roared. If he was not deaf for life after that he ought to have been! At all events he was deaf at the time to the remark, for he paid no attention to it whatever. Then the lion pawed him a little, lay down on him, rolled him about as a cat plays with a mouse, and ultimately couched a few yards off to watch jealously for the slightest sign of life. But the Dutchman was a splendid actor. Even in breathing he managed to remain motionless, and at last the lion sneaked away overwhelmed with disappointment. Then the old man slowly lifted his head, rose, congratulated himself, and returned home in a thankful state of mind.

Although lions had finally taken themselves off, and retired to safer and more distant retreats, the mountain glens of the neighbourhood were, as I have already said, still inhabited by leopards of large size and dangerous temper.

"They are powerful and savage fellows," said my friend, as he rose to inspan, "and few men like to face them unless assisted by a party, and with good dogs. One friend of mine, a doctor,

used to boast that he could stare a leopard out of countenance. At last one was caught in a trap, and the doctor tried the experiment, but only got knocked over and his nose scratched for his pains. There was a curious instance, once, of a Fingo going mad in consequence of being bitten by a leopard. The madness took the form of his feigning to be a leopard, and there was no doubt as to his insanity, for he continually growled and scratched and snapped with his teeth, and finished off by jumping through a glass door.—Now then, the cart's ready; in you go."

I jumped in, and off we went again over the sweet-scented plain,—now on a good bit of road, now on a bad; often forsaking the track altogether, and occasionally plunging into holes that knocked our heads against the hood, and tried our springs to the uttermost, till evening at last found us among the hills, where a rough-and-ready inn afforded us shelter for the night.

Passing through Somerset we came to a place named Cookhouse Drift, where there is a bridge over the Great Fish River. Near to it stood a public-house of somewhat bad character. Here we found many Kafirs lying about under the shelter of the aloes, sleeping off the effects of

their potations of "Cape-smoke" or native brandy.

We also met here with seven troopers of the frontier, armed and mounted police, as tight and serviceable a set of young fellows as one could wish to see—clad in corduroy, thorough-going, rough-and-ready colonial cavalry,—and well trained to bush fighting. They were out after seven escaped convicts, and had caught one, a big Kafir, who was handcuffed, and seemed sulky when I looked at him.

At another place, where the prickly pear was very prolific, and the bush so dense that it formed a pretty safe retreat to escaped convicts, as well as baboons and tigers, we discovered a band of Kafirs celebrating a wedding. Many a time have I read of the debased condition of savages, and something of them I have seen among the "Red men" of North America, but never have I witnessed such regardless indecency as was exhibited on this occasion by these human baboons.

Hobson stopped the cart and waited while I went to look at them. They paid no attention to me. The men, who were absolutely naked, were engaged in a slow, meaningless dance, which consisted chiefly of stamping the feet, in regular time,

while the women, who were nearly naked, clapped their hands in time and sang. Truly there is great need for the Gospel's purifying influence here!

The prickly pears, which were ripe at this time, we found to be very pleasant and refreshing, but we had to handle them circumspectly, as they were covered with prickles so fine that they pierced the skin and broke off the pear with the least touch. The great evil of prickly pear thorns is that it is almost impossible to extract them, and although it can scarcely be said that they cause pain, the irritation they produce is great and prolonged. The monkeys know this well!

I was greatly amused once, while delayed at a road-side inn, by the antics of a monkey with a prickly pear. I had fed him with part of one, of which he seemed passionately fond. Wishing to know whether monkeys as well as men were cautious in handling the fruit, I pulled another by means of a couple of sticks. The usual mode of proceeding is to rub the pear on the ground with a bunch of grass, and thus remove the prickles, when it may be handled with impunity. Without doing this however, I lifted the pear with my sticks and handed it to Jacko. He looked at it

earnestly for a few seconds, then at me with a round mouth and reproachful eyes, as though to say, "You don't mean *that*, do you?"

I smiled and nodded.

Jacko looked again at the pear and put one finger towards it with great caution, but drew back and looked up at me again, as if to say, "*Won't* you help me?"

I smiled again and shook my head, whereupon he went to work with the most gingerly and delicate touches, as if he were handling red-hot iron. At last he managed to tear a hole in the skin, into which he inserted his black nose and greedily devoured the contents. Despite his caution, however, I noticed that Jacko kept scratching his hands pretty steadily for some time afterwards.

As we advanced into the hills the roads became unimaginably bad. In one place our track had been carried away by a flood, and the boulder-covered bed of the torrent was our only road.

At last we got up into the mountain region of Glen Lynden, the place to which the Scotch settlers were sent by Government in 1820, under the care of the late Thomas Pringle, the "African

poet," who, among other pieces, wrote the beautiful poem which begins :—

> "Afar in the desert I love to ride,
> With the silent Bushboy alone by my side."

The descendants of the 1820 men now occupy these valleys. Both in physique and character they do credit to their sires.

Here I met one of the few survivors of the original settlers, Mr. Dodds Pringle, and brother to the poet. Although upwards of seventy, and a large, stout man, I saw him mount his horse with the activity of a man of thirty. At his house in Glen Lynedock, where I spent a night, they showed me an assagai, or Kafir spear, which had been bent into the form of a half-moon against his (Mr. Dodds') stomach! It happened thus :—

He was out fighting with the rest of the farmers in the war of 1851, and one day was attacked by Kafirs, one of whom flung his assagai at him with tremendous force. Mr. Pringle had just fired his rifle, and was reloading when the assagai struck him. It was arrested, however, in its deadly flight by his belt and bullet-pouch. The savage rushed forward, intending to finish his adversary by a thrust from a short spear, but old Dodds guarded the thrust with one hand, while,

with the other, he drew a pistol and shot the Kafir through the heart. At that moment another savage ran at him, but a comrade of Pringle suddenly came on the scene and the savage turned to fly. The comrade took aim at him.

"Be cool, and take him low," said Pringle, undoing his belt to examine his wound.

The comrade fired, and the savage fell.

"Are you killed?" he asked with much anxiety, turning to Pringle and glancing at the bent assagai.

"I don't know," replied the other, with a serious look, as he thrust his hand under his waist-belt, "there's no hole that I can find anyhow."

The hand, when withdrawn, was covered with blood, but it was found on examination that the wound was slight, thanks to the providential interposition of the thick bullet-pouch. The old gentleman is now naturally fond of showing the weapon which had so nearly proved fatal.*

Advancing into the Baviaans River District we passed through many places of historic interest, and scenery that must have reminded the Scottish

* Since the above was written the gallant and hearty old man has passed away, deeply regretted by all who knew him.

settlers of the rugged glens to which they had bidden farewell for ever.

Among other places, Hobson pointed out a small cavern, high up on the cliffs, which was the scene of a bloody affray not many years before the arrival of the Scotch settlers in the district.

As it illustrates the wild frontier life of those times, and bears on the subject of Colonial grievances, I shall relate it.

There was a Dutch boer, or farmer, named Bezuidenhout, who, in the year 1815, dwelt in the lonely and wild recesses of the Baviaans River District. He seems to have been a passionate, headstrong man. The Dutch boers were generally honest, sterling men, though at that time very ignorant, being far removed from the means of instruction. But Dutchmen, not less than others, have wild and foolish men amongst them, who were easily misled by designing and unprincipled adventurers.

Bezuidenhout seems to have been one of these ; at all events he was savage enough to treat one of his Hottentot servants so ill that he was cited to appear before the Court of his district, and was foolish enough to resist the summons. A messenger was therefore sent to arrest him, and as he

was known to be a daring character, and had threatened to shoot any limb of the law who should dare to approach his residence, twenty men of the Cape Corps, under Lieutenant Rousseau accompanied the messenger.

On reaching the mountain home of Bezuidenhout they found him prepared. He and a powerful half-caste in his employment were found sheltered behind the high wall of a cattle enclosure, well armed. The Dutchman called to the soldiers to stop, else he would shoot the first man. Disregarding the threat, the lieutenant extended his men in skirmishing order, and attacked. Bezuidenhout fired, happily missed, and retreated into his house, whence he passed by a back-door into the thick jungle in rear. They lost him for a time, but finally traced him to a steep krantz, or precipice, up the almost inaccessible face of which he and his follower had taken refuge in a small cavern. The muzzles of their rifles were seen protruding from the entrance. Lieutenant Rousseau therefore crept up warily, until he reached a ledge above the aperture, from which point he challenged the farmer to surrender, telling him the reason of his being there, and assuring him of personal safety.

The infatuated man replied he would die rather than submit. The Lieutenant expostulated, and endeavoured to persuade him to surrender, but he was obdurate. Night was approaching. The officer was anxious to get his men out of these dark kloofs in daylight. He therefore ordered them to ascend in two bodies. They did so, reached the cave, and rushed to the entrance, from which Bezuidenhout fired, but without effect, the muzzle of his rifle having been thrown up. At the same moment one of the soldiers fired into the cavern, and shot the farmer dead on the spot. The servant surrendered, and on entering the place it was found that a large quantity of ammunition had been collected there, evidently with a view to standing a siege.

After the departure of the military, the relations and friends of the unfortunate and misguided man assembled to bury him, and, over his grave, they vowed to avenge his death. A brother of Bezuidenhout harangued them, and so wrought on their feelings that a great number of the farmers of that and the neighbouring districts ultimately assembled under arms, with the avowed intention of ridding themselves altogether of British interference! They went still further, and took a step

which might have been much more serious. They sent Cornelius Faber, a brother-in-law of the Bezuidenhouts, to the Kafir chief Gaika for the purpose of rousing that savage and his hordes to attack the Colony.

Of course Government was obliged to frustrate such an attempt with all possible speed. Troops were immediately sent against the rebels, under Colonel Cuyler. One of the rebel leaders, named Prinsloo, was captured at a critical moment, and the main body, amounting to between three and four hundred, was finally met with. But before proceeding to extremities, a field-commandant, William Nel, volunteered to go alone among the rebels, and reason with them. He did so, and was so far successful as to shake the resolution of some, for, although disaffected, many of these men were by no means so foolish as their leaders. Indeed, many of them had been threatened and coerced into rebellion. Seeing the effect of Nel's remonstrances, Faber, Bezuidenhout, and other leaders, assembled their forces at a place called Slachters Nek, and exacted from them an oath to remain faithful to each other until they had expelled the tyrants from the frontier.

Next morning Colonel Cuyler proceeded to

attack them. On his approach thirty or more of them threw down their arms in token of surrender; the remainder, seeing that resistance would be hopeless, retired into the fastnesses of Baviaans River. There they were followed and surrounded, and an attempt was made to bring them to submission, but during the night most of them managed to escape by familiar mountain-passes.

The principal leaders, rejecting all terms, escaped with their wagons, families, and goods to the Winterberg Mountains, bordering on Kafirland, where they hoped to be safe; but, being followed up hotly by a body of troops under Major Fraser, they were eventually overtaken and surrounded in a deep kloof. Here six of them were brought to bay, among whom were Faber, with his wife, his son—a lad of fourteen years,—and John Bezuidenhout. These, retiring behind the wagons, a skirmish began, which was not concluded until one of the soldiers was killed, another wounded, Bezuidenhout shot, and Faber and his wife and son severely wounded. Then the party were taken prisoners.

Subsequently fifty or sixty of the other rebels were captured and taken to Capetown. Of these thirty-nine of the most culpable were tried on the

charge of high treason. Six were condemned to death; the others, after being compelled to witness the execution of their leaders, were to undergo various degrees of punishment, according to their proved culpability. One of the six afterwards had the capital sentence commuted to transportation for life.

The execution of the five ringleaders was a terrible affair, which has left an indelible impression on the Colony. The gallows was erected on the place named Slachters Nek, where the leaders had caused their comrades to swear fidelity to each other and their cause. Through some mismanagement the erection was not sufficiently strong to bear the weight of five heavy men. It fell to the ground under their struggles. The half-strangled men crawled to the feet of Colonel Cuyler, who, with a body of troops, was there to see the sentence carried out. They begged for mercy amid the shouts and cries of their agonised friends, who could scarcely be restrained by the military, and who regarded the accident as a direct interposition of Providence. But the Colonel turned a deaf ear to them. The gallows was again set up, and the five men finally ended their mortal career. The last request of their sobbing

friends, that they might obtain their dead bodies, was refused!

I am not an apologist for lawless disorder, neither do I think that it is safe to interfere with the course of justice, except under very peculiar circumstances; but I feel strongly that the friends of these men were right,—that God *did* give to Colonel Cuyler a very good opportunity on that occasion to pause and see whether it might not please his superiors to temper justice with mercy. The majesty of the law had been vindicated, for no one could doubt the thorough earnestness of the *intention* that these men should be hung, while the mercy of the law-makers might have very appropriately been extended in connection with the accident.

It would not have been altogether out of place, too, if the Government had taken into consideration the fact that these men had to a large extent been driven to rebellion by its own mismanagement. It was not the death of Frederick Bezuidenhout alone which roused them to frenzy. If it be true that "oppression driveth a wise man mad," what is to be expected of the somewhat unwise and the ignorant? It was years upon years of misgovernment, misapprehen-

sion, injustice, and sometimes pure oppression, that created the bitter feeling of indignation against the British which burned—if, indeed, it does not still burn—in the Dutch-African breast, and I feel quite sure that we should never have heard of the "rebellion of the frontier boers," the "emigration of the Dutch farmers," the Orange Free State, or the Transvaal Republic, if it had not been for the high-handed tyranny and the dense stupidity of the Colonial Governments of days gone by.

LETTER VII.

LION-HUNTING, ETC., IN THE EARLY DAYS—BUSHMEN AND THEIR TROUBLES.

It is deeply interesting to tread in the footsteps of bold adventurous men, and visit the scenes which have been rendered classic by their deeds of heroic daring or of patient endurance. So I found it during my brief sojourn in the regions of Baviaans River, where, upwards of fifty years before, my countrymen had faced, fought, and subdued the savage, the wilderness, and the wild beast.

Their poet-leader has written many a grand and graphic account of episodes of that period. I quote one which, although published, may not be so well known as it deserves. It refers by name to men who have figured in colonial history, and whose descendants still people the mountains and valleys in the neighbourhood of Glen Lynden.

THE LION HUNT.

MOUNT, mount for the hunting, with musket and spear !
Call our friends to the field—for the Lion is near !
Call Arend and Ekhard and Groepe to the spoor ;*
Call Muller and Coetzer and Lucas Van Vurr.

Side up Eildon Cleugh, and blow loudly the bugle :
Call Slinger and Allie and Dikkop and Dugal,
And George with the elephant-gun on his shoulder—
In perilous pinch none is better or bolder.

In the gorge of the glen lie the bones of my steed,
And the hoofs of a heifer of fatherland breed :
But mount, my brave boys ! if our rifles prove true,
We 'll soon make the spoiler his ravages rue.

Ho ! the Hottentot lads have discovered the track—
To his den in the desert we 'll follow him back ;
But tighten your girths, and look well to your flints,
For heavy and fresh are the villain's footprints.

Through the rough rocky kloof in the grey Huntley Glen,
Past the wild olive clump where the wolf has his den,
By the black-eagle's rock at the foot of the fell,
We have tracked him at length to the buffalo's well.

Now mark yonder brake where the bloodhounds are howling,
And hark that hoarse sound—like the deep thunder growling ;
'Tis his lair—'tis his voice !—from your saddles alight,
He 's at bay in the brushwood preparing for fight.

* Track or trail.

Leave the horses behind, and be still every man ;
Let the Mullers and Rennies advance in the van ;
Keep fast in your ranks ;—by the yell of yon hound,
The savage, I guess, will be out—with a bound !

He comes ! the tall jungle before him loud crashing,
His mane bristled fiercely, his fiery eyes flashing ;
With a roar of disdain he leaps forth in his wrath,
To challenge the foe that dare leaguer his path.

He couches—ay, now we 'll see mischief, I dread ;
Quick, level your rifles and aim at his head ;
Thrust forward the spears and unsheath every knife—
St. George ! he's upon us ! now, fire, lads, for life !

He 's wounded, but yet he 'll draw blood ere he falls.
Ha ! under his paw see Bezuidenhout sprawls ;
Now, Diederik ! Christian ! right in the brain
Plant each man his bullet—Hurrah ! he is slain !

Bezuidenhout—up, man ! 'tis only a scratch—
(You were always a scamp, and have met with your match !)
What a glorious lion !—what sinews—what claws—
And seven feet ten from the rump to the jaws !

His hide, with the paws and the bones of his skull,
With the spoils of the leopard and buffalo-bull,
We 'll send to Sir Walter.*—Now, boys, let us dine,
And talk of our deeds o'er a flask of old wine.

* Sir Walter Scott.

The foregoing verses convey a graphic idea of what these early settlers of this region had occasionally to encounter. Their every-day life cannot be better illustrated than by a brief quotation from the diary of the same gifted writer.

"*October* 1*st.*—Arrival of the Somerset wagon with flour, seed-corn, etc. At Mr. Sydserff's request, I discharged his servant Sandy from the party, gave him a pass, countersigned by the Deputy-Landdrost, and sent him off with the Somerset wagon towards Grahamstown. This lad has turned out to be at once a fool and a blackguard, and utterly irreclaimable.

"4*th.*—A sharp frost last night blighted all our early potatoes, pumpkins, melons, kidney-beans, etc. It appears we had sown some of our seed too early.

"8*th, Sunday.*—A troop of about twenty quaggas galloped through the corner of our gardens during divine service.

"9*th.*—A herd of hartebeests passed close to our huts, pursued by a pack of six wild dogs (*Hyæna venatica*). Fired at the latter, but without effect. This day Mr. John Rennie, being out hunting on Hyndhope Fells, fell in with two wild Bushmen, dressed in sheepskins. They ran off on

his approach, but made no demonstration of hostility. He came upon six hyenas devouring a hartebeest, and brought me its skull and horns.

"11*th.*—Visited by three boers from the Tarka —Jourdan, Erasmus, and De Beer,—desirous of exchanging horses and cattle for guns and ammunition. Completed my map of the location.

"16*th.*—Surprised by a slight fall of snow; weather chill and cloudy. The laughing hyena heard near the folds last night. The sound truly horrible.

"21*st.*—Fine weather. Killed a large yellow snake.

"23*d.*—Received a visit from our district clergyman, the Rev. J. Evans of Cradock. He brought a packet from the Landdrost conveying letters from the Colonial Secretary, assuring me of the continued support of Government, and giving us the agreeable intelligence that a party of emigrants from the West of Scotland were speedily expected out, who would be located close beside us. Received also very pleasant letters from Scotland, from Dr. Philip, and from our parted comrade Mr. Elliott. Religious service in

the evening by Mr. Evans. All much pleased and comforted.

"24*th.*—Mr. G. Rennie, who at my request had gone with a party of Hottentots to explore the country beyond the mountains towards the Koonap River, returned with a very favourable report of it. Abundance of wood, water, and rich pasturage. He saw a great deal of large game, and the recent traces of elephants. Shot a gnu and hartebeest.

"*Nov.* 1*st.*—The weather warm and serene, like the finest summer weather in England. Two snakes and a large scorpion killed. Turtle-doves, touracoos, thrushes, finches, and other birds of beautiful plumage become numerous.

"6*th.*—Violent storm of thunder. The peals fearfully loud. Magnificent clouds at sunset.

"15*th.*—A tiger-wolf (*Hyæna crocuta*) broke into the kraal last night, and killed several sheep.

"22*d.*—A wolf-trap constructed, with the aid of the Hottentots, of large stones and timber.

"29*th.*—A wolf (*Hyæna*) caught in the trap.

"*Dec.* 4*th.*—A heavy rain for three days, swells the river to an unfordable size. All the dry beds of torrents filled with furious floods.

"7*th.*—Weather again warm and serene. Mr. G. Rennie kills another wild-boar at Glen Yair.

"19*th.*—My brother John finds stone fit for millstones, and with the aid of one of the Hottentots begins to construct a small mill on the model of Wentzel Coetzer's.

"29*th.*—My father narrowly escapes being gored by a furious ox. Blight appears in the wheat.

"30*th.*—Receive a large packet of letters and newspapers from Scotland. All deeply interested. This is the first packet of British newspapers that has reached us."

How all the Robinson-Crusoe blood in one's veins is stirred by such a diary! Truly I sometimes almost regret that I was not born to become a pioneer settler in the African wilds!

However, it is some comfort to have the privilege of paying a flying visit to these same wilds, which in many respects are quite as wild now as they were then. The lions, elephants, quaggas, and some others of the large game, it is true, have taken themselves off to remoter wilds, but the leopards, hyenas, baboons,

deer, etc., still inhabit these kloofs, while snakes, scorpions, and the like are as plentiful as ever.

Talking of baboons reminds me that these creatures are said to sleep sometimes on a ledge of rock on the face of a precipice for security against lurking foes. I was assured that sometimes a row of them may be seen in such a situation sitting sound asleep, with their faces in their hands, against the precipice, as if saying their prayers, and their tails hanging over the ledge. Of course I do not vouch for the truth of such reports. I am answerable only for what I profess to have seen.

The highest type of monkey suggests—thanks, or, rather, blame to Darwin—the lowest type of man in Africa. This is the Bushman, or, as the Dutch have it, Bosjesman. He is a branch of the Hottentot race, and a very miserable, stunted branch, nevertheless he is very far indeed removed from the baboon. He has no tail, for certain; at least if he has, he conceals it effectually. He wears garments, which no monkey does, and he speaks, which no monkey ever did.

No thanks to the white man, however, if the poor Bushman is not a baboon with the spirit of

a tiger, for he has been most shamefully treated in time past. In these very mountains around Glen Lynden, as well as on the Sneewberg range and elsewhere, the Bushman was literally hunted and shot down like a wild beast by the Dutch-African boors of the last century. It is true the Bushmen were arrant thieves, and committed great havoc among the frontier farmers at various times, and it was both natural and right that these farmers should defend their homes and property. But it was neither right nor natural that "commandoes" should be fitted out to hunt down and exterminate these unfortunate natives, as if they were vermin.

A Dutch-African colonist related to Mr. Pringle an incident of which he was an eye-witness, and which, the colonist having been a youth at the time, must have happened about the latter part of the last century.

He had just commenced his burgher service and was out on his first "commando," that is, his first expedition against the Bushmen. The party had surprised and destroyed a considerable Kraal, or village of huts, of these people. When the firing ceased five women were found still living. "The

lives of these, after a long discussion," said the colonist, "it was resolved to spare, because one farmer wanted a servant for this purpose, and another for that. The unfortunate wretches were ordered to march in front of the commando; but it was soon found that they impeded our progress, not being able to proceed fast enough. They were, therefore, ordered to be shot. The scene which ensued often haunts me to the present hour. The helpless victims, perceiving what was intended, sprung to us, and clung so firmly to some of the party, that it was for some time impossible to shoot them without hazarding the lives of those they held fast. Four of them were at length despatched; but the fifth could by no means be torn from one of our comrades, whom she grasped in her agony, and his entreaties to be allowed to take the woman home were at last complied with. She went with her preserver, served him long and faithfully, and, I believe, died in the family. May God forgive the land!"

There are few who will not join this Dutch-African in his prayer; and, truly, methinks the prayer has been granted, inasmuch as the government of the whole land has at last been

transferred to British hands. No doubt there are some Dutch-Africans who regard this transfer unfavourably, nevertheless I think it is a blessing, for although the British are very far from immaculate, and have much to answer for as regards the past, few will deny that, in the main, their treatment of natives is now at least well intended, which is more than can be said of their Dutch predecessors in power.

Happily the days of barefaced tyranny and unchallenged cruelty have gone by in South Africa. Her people may indeed yet live to hear the yell of the Kafir and the terrible sounds of war, but never again can they see cold-blooded butchery pass unpunished, or listen to the wail of the slave. Mistakes and bad management are more or less characteristic of all human Governments, but legalised robbery, cruelty, and murder can no longer flourish under the Union Jack—at least not in times of peace.

When the Scotch party settled at Glen Lynden, their troubles with wild-beast pilferers were augmented occasionally by the appearance of Bosjesman-thieves.

"In the beginning of October," writes Mr. Pringle, "we were somewhat alarmed by the dis-

covery of a band of predatory Bushmen, lurking among the rocks and caverns of the wild mountains between us and the valley of the Tarka. Lieutenant Pettingal, an officer of engineers, who was then in our valley, engaged in the Government survey of the country, discovered this horde in searching for some of his horses that were missing. Suspecting, from the traces, that they had been carried off by Bushmen, he went out with an armed troop in pursuit, and came upon a party of these wild marauders in one of the most savage recesses of the neighbouring mountains. They were at breakfast, on a grey horse which they had slaughtered, and had steaks roasting on the fire cut out of the flank, with the hide still upon them. Pettingal, enraged by the supposed loss of his best blood-horse, poured in a volley upon them; but, apparently, without effect, for they all scrambled off with inconceivable agility among the rocks and bushes. He recovered, however, some of his own horses, and eight belonging to our neighbour Wentzel Coetzer, which were tied up under an overhanging cliff near the top of a mountain."

There were no Bushmen running wild among the beautiful hills and valleys of Glen Lynden

when Hobson and I entered it, but the region was not free, as I have related, from naked Kafirs, and it is still noted for its population of hairy baboons.

LETTER VIII.

RAIN! RAIN! RAIN!—BABOONS RIVER—SEAHORSE KLOOF—WE HUNT THE HILLS ON HORSEBACK IN SPITE OF RAIN—FLOODS AND ACCIDENTS—PART FROM HOBSON—MAIL-CARTS AND DIAMOND DIGGERS.

RAIN is a blessed refreshment to the thirsty land; it is a life-giving cordial to the thirsty soul; but when rain descends in torrents and without cessation during the greater part of one's brief holiday, or at any other very unseasonable period, and when one is *not* thirsty, it becomes depressing, to say the least.

Thus was I treated by rain during my week in Baviaans River. Hobson and I had at last pushed up into the very heart of that wild mountain region,—the allotted home of the Scottish settlers of 1820, the scene of many Kafir raids and bloody battles.

For months before we had lived in perpetual sunshine. Hobson had sighed for a drop of rain.

Sometimes South Africans have to sigh for a twelvemonth before relief is sent. Even while I write, the colony is suffering excessively from drought, and many farmers have been ruined. On the Karroo I had almost come to forget the sensation of being rained upon, and an umbrella there would have appeared as great an impropriety as a muslin overcoat in Nova Zembla. Nevertheless, no sooner did we arrive at Seahorse Kloof than the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain came down steadily night and day, while the sky presented a universal grey that would have done credit to the Scottish Highlands. It was too bad!

My main object in penetrating to these rugged wilds was to visit one of the Pringles, a relative of personal friends on the borders of my own land. Finding that Mr. Pringle was absent from home, we turned aside to visit a cousin of Hobson's, a Mr. John Edwards, who dwelt in what appeared to me the fag-end of the world,—a lonely farm-house, at the head of the mountain gorge named Seahorse Kloof.

"It's a splendid country," said Hobson, "with lots of game, and Edwards is a noted hunter, besides being a capital fellow."

What more could man desire? We arrived full of hope and spirits, received a hearty welcome, and awoke next day to find the sky grey, as I have said, and the rain descending steadily.

Of course we hoped against hope, but as day after day came and went, our hopes and spirits sank. Then there came a reaction that is not uncommon in the circumstances,—we grew desperate, and began to enjoy our misery. We got out our rifles, took up a sheltered position in the shed of an outhouse, and blazed away from dripping morn to pouring eve at empty bottles, amongst which we did tremendous execution.

Of course, also, we relieved the tedium of enforced indoor life by song and talk, but these resources could not make up for lost time, and the depth to which I had been sunk was revealed to me by the sudden rebound of joy when, after a week of heavy wet, there was a break in the universal grey and the sun came feebly out. Blessed sun, if thou wert to roast me alive, methinks I would love thee still!

Before this happened, however, we had a few brief intervals of modified dripping. During one of these, in which the rain all but ceased for a forenoon, I resolved to go out into one of the

mountain gorges for a ramble alone. My host lent me his double barrel—one barrel being for shot, the other rifled.

"It is loaded," said he, "the right with shot, the left with ball."

"Very good," said I; "expect a tiger when I return."

My host smiled. Leopards were there, truly, but as he knew, and as I have elsewhere mentioned, they never show themselves except when driven out of their retreats by dogs. To say truth, I only wanted a walk, expected to kill a rabbit or a crow, and hoped faintly for a deer. None of these things did I see, but I found a small coney, at which I fired the shot barrel. To my surprise there came no report from the gun, merely a feeble *spirt*. I afterwards learned that one of "the boys" had loaded it the day before with a miniature charge for small birds. Hope increased as I pushed further up into the Kloof, and fancy began to play. Although there was no chance of seeing "tigers," it was something to know that such creatures were really there; that I was actually in the native home of "wild beasts." The floor of my host's parlour was covered with the beautiful spotted skins of animals

which had been shot or trapped by himself. One of these measured about nine feet, which, allowing three for the tail, gives a body of six feet long.

As the day advanced rain again began to fall, but nothing could damp me now. I had almost worked myself into the belief that I was tiger-hunting! I advanced with cautious tread, looked earnestly into dark caverns, and passed under the deep shadow of thick and tangled bushes with feelings of awe. I even indulged my wayward fancy by thinking of Gordon Cumming and Livingstone; did my best to mistake gnarled roots for big snakes, and red stones for couching leopards. At last, while in the sombre twilight of a dense mass of underwood, I actually did see a bit of brown hair moving. I threw forward my rifle with a promptitude worthy of Hawkeye himself, but experienced no shock of excitement, for the object was so palpably a small rabbit, or coney, that imagination sternly refused to deceive me. Baboons had been heard barking on the evening of our arrival. I looked out for these, but saw none. In short, none of the inhabitants of wood, glen, or mountain, save myself, were foolish enough to go out in such weather. Nevertheless

I returned to the house happy and ready for supper.

On Saturday morning the sunshine, which I have before mentioned, gladdened our eyes and hearts. The weather seemed at last propitious. Edwards at once ordered out horses and rifles, and away we went—four of us—up the mountains after deer. It was a new experience in regard to riding. Horses, I knew, were capable of travelling over exceedingly rough roads, and trained ones could even ascend staircases, but I now learned that horses can climb precipices. Never saw anything like it before; never even imagined it!

Our prospects were fair, but they were false, for, ere long, the rain began again. However, we were reckless by that time and defied it. Riding up the kloof that I had traversed on foot, we sighted deer but got no shot. Gaining the top of the kloof we saw more deer—out of range. Passed over the shoulder of the mountain into another glen, and skirted the top of a precipice. While descending some slopes at an angle of I know not what, the use of our cruppers became strikingly apparent. I began, for the first time in my life, to feel anxiety as to the strength of a horse's tail. In going up such places the saddle

girths were severely tried, but the mane kept one from slipping down one's perpendicular animal.

Coming to a comparatively level stretch we sank into a silently reflective and forgetful mood, while the rain-drops dribbled down our noses, sopped from our mackintoshes to our saddles, whence they re-ascended, through the capillary influence of garments, to our necks, and soon equalised our humidity.

"Look out!" shouted Edwards, suddenly.

We all obeyed, and saw a brown deer labouring up a slope so steep that running was out of the question. I stuck my heels into my steed and faced him at the slope. He took it. He would have taken the side of a house, I think, if told to. But he gasped with the frantic nature of his efforts. I *felt* as if he were leaping up the slope, kangaroo fashion, on his hind legs. On reaching the top, the brown deer was observed disappearing in the distance. It was of no use weeping. Rain would have washed the tears away.

"Look out!" again shouted our host; "get off!"

We all obeyed, cocked our guns, and gazed. A herd of deer were just visible in the mist. We all fired, and missed.

"Very mysterious," muttered one of our number,—I forget which.

We loaded hastily, but not quickly. Our guns were muzzle-loaders, and rain does not facilitate loading. In trying to force a bullet down, my ramrod slipped, and I cut my knuckles severely.

"You've drawn first blood, anyhow," savagely muttered one of us,—I forget who.

We mounted again, and let me tell you that mounting on a steep hillside in a long wet mackintosh with a big rifle, bleeding knuckles, and a heavy heart, is difficult as well as disagreeable.

To increase our enjoyment, Edwards again shouted, "Get off!" We did so with more than military obedience, and I saw a deer standing not more than a hundred yards in front of me. I gave him the rifled barrel. He hopped. Then the shot barrel. He winced and fled, but presently stopped and lay down. Edwards ran towards him, kneeled, fired, and broke his leg. Amongst us all we managed to kill him, and then turned homewards.

The only noteworthy incident that occurred on the way back was the starting of a troop of baboons, which went scampering down the cliffs in consternation like balls of brown hair. We

HUNTING THE BAVIAANS RIVER MOUNTAINS.—Page 126.

also descended some broken ground, so steep that it was almost impossible to keep the saddle. Looking at Edwards, I observed that the ears of his horse appeared between his feet, while its tail waved over his head like a dragoon's plume. At last we were compelled to dismount and lead our animals, our minds being sometimes divided between the danger of missing our footing in front, and being tumbled on by our steeds behind.

Thus we hunted on the Baviaans River mountains in adverse circumstances, and returned home moderately pleased, though not particularly successful.

The rains had by that time flooded the whole country, and rendered travelling almost impossible. The river was running wildly past the house, and there was no bridge over it. The nearest church was fifteen miles distant, so that going to it was impracticable. But Christianity is happily not dependent on forms or ceremonies. Remembering that God is not confined to places made with hands, and that wherever "two or three are met together in the Lord's name," He is "in the midst of them," we assembled together and had "church in the house." So, as we are told by Pringle the poet, the "settlers" had worshipped

God in the same region upwards of fifty years before.

We held a consultation on Monday as to our departure. The weather was fine at last, but the river flooded. The tortuous nature of its bed necessitated five or six crossings in the course of twelve miles. Were they fordable? was the question. "We shall go and try," was Hobson's final decision. "Try" is the watchword of all true pioneers. We saddled and set forth. Hobson drove the cart, with my portmanteau. The first part of the journey I was to accompany Edwards on horseback. We had a Hottentot servant with us, who rode one horse and led another.

It was a most enjoyable ride in the bright sunshine that day. Everything was fresh, green, and glittering after the long-continued rain. Baboons were seen on the way, and shouted at us, whether in defiance, derision, or encouragement, is best known to themselves. All the "drifts" or fords were passed in safety till we came to the last on Baviaans River—close to Mr. Dodds Pringle's residence at Lynedock. Here the powerful stream rose to our saddles, and the opposite bank had been so much washed away that it seemed impossible to get the cart up.

CROSSING A "DRIFT."—PAGE 129.

"I'll cross, and get spades at Lynedock," said Edwards, "and we'll cut a slope in the bank."

In he went, floundered through, and managed to ascend the opposite bank, though not without a severe struggle, for besides being high and steep, it was very wet—coated, in fact, with soft mud.

The Tottie with the led horse followed his master. I followed the Tottie—close in his steps, so as to get the benefit of his experience, either by imitating or avoiding his example. We gained the opposite side. I saw the Hottentot's horse rise before me as if mounting a staircase. He slipped, and floundered on his nose and knees. The led horse disconcerted him. Just then my own horse made a bound up the bank, and pawed the mud for a moment. "Slack the reins! give him his head!" shouted Edwards. I did so. With a mighty plunge and a groan the sturdy animal bore me to the top of the bank in safety. I turned and saw the Tottie's horse throw up its head and fore-legs, as if imploringly, to the skies, and fall backwards. The Tottie himself appeared for a moment in the form of a spread-eagle, and then horse and man went back with a sounding splash into the river.

Hobson, who had been all the time enjoying

the spectacle, now crossed with the cart; but, on taking the bank, despite their utmost efforts, the powerful pair stuck fast on their knees and noses. Meanwhile the Hottentot scrambled out with his animals, none the worse of the plunge.

As the horses could not move the cart an inch in their semi-perpendicular position, we unharnessed them, and the four of us, by slow degrees, working one wheel at a time, zig-zagged the cart upward a few feet, when the horses were once more attached, and the crossing was finally accomplished. Here we bade farewell to our kind host, the proprietor of Seahorse Kloof.

That evening we came to "Smith's farm," one of the places where the Diamond-field coaches stop to change horses. It was beyond the mountains at the commencement of the great rolling plains. Here I had arranged to await the arrival of the mail-cart, and proceed *viâ* Bedford to Grahamstown.

And here, with deep regret, I bade farewell to my friend Hobson—a true-hearted, well-educated Englishman, born in the colony; the son of one of the "1820 settlers;" a brave, bold, fearless, loving man, who has hunted lions, leopards, elephants, zebras, and all the large game of Africa

in his youth, and was "out" in the last war,—a splendid type of those hardy men whose lot it is to subdue the wilderness; a warm friend, and a sincere follower of our Lord.

There were several hours to pass before the arrival of the mail-cart. Smith and his people were busy, and, as there were no guests at the time in that lonely road-side inn, I had plenty of leisure to bask in the sunshine, sketch the cactus bushes that abounded there, gaze dreamily over the illimitable Karroo, and meditate sadly on friendships and partings.

The first thing that struck me on turning from Smith's humble abode to ramble on the plains was the presence of a bad smell—a very bad smell! I brought my nose to bear in various directions, but could discover no cause. Having nothing to do I applied myself with diligence to the investigation, all the more earnestly that I found it impossible to get out of the tainted atmosphere. Regarding the heavens steadily, for it was very calm, and making up my mind as to the direction which the little wind that there was came from, I followed my nose, and was led by it to the decaying carcass of an ox which lay not a hundred yards from Smith's door. My

opinion of Smith was lowered! When I passed to windward of the carcass, the bad smell ceased.

I mention this, not because it is an interesting incident, but because it is a feature of South African travel. Wherever you go on the Karroo, there you will find the rotting remains of poor creatures, which, having "died in harness," are cast loose for the benefit of the vultures. These ill-looking and disgusting birds are most useful scavengers. They scent the quarry from afar—so far, indeed, as to be beyond the vision of human eyes. You may gaze round you far and near in the plains, and behold no sign of any bird; but kill one of your horses and leave it dead on the plain, and straightway, from various quarters of the heavens, you will see little specks which grow and float, and circle and grow, until they assume the ugly form and huge proportions of unclean vultures, which will perch on the carcass, and make away with it in a remarkably short space of time. It was only the skin and bones of the ox which rendered themselves obnoxious at Smith's. Vultures had cleared out of it every morsel of flesh some days before.

As I have said, there are no roads worthy of

the name in many parts of the Karroo. Those that exist are often in such a dilapidated condition that travellers sometimes find it more pleasant to forsake them and drive over the rugged veldt. This can be easily understood when it is remembered that the roads are traversed by the celebrated "Cape wagons," which are of enormous size and weight, requiring from sixteen to twenty oxen to draw them. Such vehicles finding a hollow in a road, soon make it a deep hole, which finally becomes an impassable cavern. In drawing, struggling, and fighting with these wagons, sick and weakly animals constantly succumb, are left to die, and thus vultures are supplied with a continual feast, while carcasses and skulls, and bleaching bones, are familiar objects by the roadsides on the plains.

At last the mail-cart arrived, and I secured a place.

Travelling by mail-cart in South Africa is, as you may well imagine, rugged work. It tries ordinary constitutions. It is murder to the delicate. Let invalids, meditating a visit to the salubrious "Cape," make a note of this. I would by no means dissuade them from going, but if they do go, let them not travel by mail-cart.

It is usually a small two-wheeled vehicle drawn by four horses and driven by an ass, who seems to think that every one ought to possess an iron frame as callous as his own. The cart has a species of canvas hood, such as I have described in a former letter, stretched on a movable frame. It serves the purpose of a monstrous parasol. You get into this cart, the team is cleverly started by, it may be, a smart fellow, and driven away with the speed at which mails ought to travel; or it is wildly started by a braggadocio driver, who sets out with a plunge, and continues his course with a prolonged crash, as though the fate of empires reposed in his mail-bags. You come to a ditch; you go in with a plunge, and come out with a jerk. Your head hits the back of the hood when you go in, your nose hits the back of the driver when you come out. A rut in the road causes one wheel to descend suddenly about eighteen inches; or an unavoidable lump of that height produces the same effect; the hood gives you a deliberate punch on the head. Before you have quite recovered, it gives you another. A miniature precipice appears. This was caused by the latest waterspout choosing to cut the road instead of follow it. The mail-cart does not pause. Its

springs were made, apparently, to spring. It descends. For one instant you are left in the air, the next you resume your seat—with violence. This sort of thing does not last long, however, for you quickly become wise. You acquire the habit of involuntarily stiffening your backbone at the ditches, of yielding to the ruts, and of holding on at the precipices. Still, with all your precautions, you suffer severely. I have been seriously informed that, during some of their plunges on what may be called stormy roads, men have been jolted bodily out of mail-carts at the Cape, and I can easily believe it.

The Diamond-field mail was full, but they kindly *made* room for me, and plastered my portmanteau, like an excrescence, on the other baggage.

The drive to Bedford was too short to admit of much familiar intercourse with the diggers,—if diggers they were. Subsequently I met with a successful digger, who told me a good deal about the diamond fields. He was a Scot, who had left a lucrative claim to be managed by a partner while he took a trip to the "old country." His account of diamond digging inclined me to think that coal-heaving is a much easier occupation,

and more remunerative on the whole, except in the case of lucky diggers. This Scot showed me what he called a "big diamond," and allowed me to make a careful drawing of it. He could not guess at its value. If it had been a pure diamond like the "star of South Africa," it would have been worth many thousands of pounds, but it was not pure. According to digger parlance it was "off-colour," and, therefore, not excessively valuable. Still it was a precious gem, and would doubtless fetch several hundreds of pounds. Of course it was unpolished, but even in that state was very beautiful. It weighed seventy-eight carats. The star of South Africa, above referred to, was a pure and magnificent gem. It was found by a Hottentot, named Swartzboy, and sold by him for £400 to Niekirk, who disposed of it the same day to Messrs. Lillienfield for £12,000—so, at least, runs one account of the matter.

Late in the evening we reached Bedford.

As we started next morning at break of day my personal knowledge of that flourishing town is too limited to warrant expatiation thereon. It may be that the vision of ghostly houses passing our cart in the morning mists suggested to my

sleepy imagination the idea of a town, but I cannot remember that it did. Possibly the fact that the population numbered above 1000 may have occurred to my mind, but I think not. It is more probable that the mind, if it operated at all, pictured the population as recumbent and snoring. Indeed, the only thing that memory will recall, when severely taxed, in regard to Bedford, is—bed, its first syllable.

LETTER IX.

CROSSING THE GREAT FISH RIVER—TRAVELLING AT THE CAPE AS IT IS TO BE—GRAHAMSTOWN, HER EARLY STRUGGLES AND PRESENT PROSPERITY.

Travelling in South Africa is occasionally interrupted by sudden storms of rain which convert dry beds of streams into roaring torrents, and perennial rivers into devastating floods.

At the Great Fish River I came on a specimen of the mighty power of water in the ruins of a splendid bridge. The great floods of the previous year had carried one-half of it away. The other half—denuded of its flooring and all its woodwork, and standing out against the sky a mere skeleton of iron girders—still connected the left bank of the river with the massive tower of masonry in the middle. From this tower to the other bank was a gulf impassable to horse or cart. The great river itself flows in a deep channel. It was still somewhat flooded. From

CROSSING THE GREAT FISH RIVER.—Page 138.

its high banks we saw it roaring more than forty feet beneath the level of the bridge. It was clear to the most ignorant eye that fording the stream was impossible. I looked inquiringly at the driver.

"You 'll have to go over on the rope," he said, with a sardonic smile.

"The rope?" said I, with an earnest gaze at the impassable gulf.

"Yes, the rope. There 's a man crossing now."

I looked again, and observed something like a cobweb on the sky between the central pier and the opposite bank. There was a black spot that resembled a spider moving slowly along the cobweb. It was a fellow-man!

"And the mails and luggage?" I asked.

"Goes over same way."

"The cart and horses?"

"Don't go over at all. Get fresh uns on tother side. There was once a box on the river for hauling 'em over, but it 's bin damaged."

The process of crossing was begun at once.

The driver and some workmen shouldered the bags and baggage, while the passengers—of whom there were three—followed to the central pier.

To men with heads liable to giddiness the

passage from the bank to the pier would have been trying, for, the floor having been carried away, we had to walk on the open girders, *à la* Blondin, looking down past our feet to the torrent as to a miniature Niagara. The distance of forty feet seemed changed to four hundred from that position. Fortunately none of us were afflicted with giddy heads.

The flat space on the tower-top gained, we found two workmen engaged in tying our baggage to a little platform about four feet square, which was suspended by ropes to a couple of little wheels. These wheels travelled on a thick cable, —the spider web before referred to. The contrivance was hauled to and fro by a smaller line after the manner of our rocket apparatus for rescuing life at sea, and, when we passengers afterwards sat down on it with nothing but the tight grip of our hands on an iron bar to save us from falling into the flood below, we flattered ourselves that we had attained to something resembling the experience of those who have been saved from shipwreck.

Travelling here may be said to be yet in its infancy. Railroads are few and short, but energy is being roused in regard to this matter, and plans

have been proposed which, if carried out, will revolutionise South Africa to an extent that will surprise its own inhabitants.

There are enlightened men there who foresee this. There are also men who seem to me prejudiced,—and can't believe this. They appear to regard their land as not sufficiently rich in products and in population to justify vigorous railway construction. They seem to hold the erroneous doctrine that travellers and traffic create railways, whereas all experience goes to prove that railways create travellers and traffic. Of course at their first beginnings railways were formed by the few hundreds of travellers who were chiefly traffickers, but no sooner were they called into being than they became creative,—they turned thousands of stay-at-homes into travellers; they rushed between the great centres of industry, sweeping up the people in their train, and, with a grand contempt of littleness in every form, caught up the slow-going carts and coaches of former days in their huge embrace, and whirled them along in company with any number you chose of tons and bales of merchandise; they groaned up the acclivities of Highland hills, and snorted into sequestered glens, alluring, nay, com-

pelling, the lonely dwellers to come out, and causing hosts of men, with rod and gun and hammer and botanical box, to go in ; they scouted the old highroads, and went, like mighty men of valour, straight to the accomplishment of their ends, leaping over and diving under each other, across everything, through anything, and sticking at nothing, until over lands where, fifty years ago, only carts and coaches used to creep and poor pedestrians were wont to plod, cataracts of travellers now flow almost without intermission night and day—the prince rolling in his royal bedroom from palace to palace ; the huntsman flying to the field, with his groom and horse in a box behind him ; the artisan travelling in comfort to his daily toil, with his tools and a mysterious tin of victuals at his feet ; thousands on thousands of busy beings hurrying through the land where one or two crawled before ; shoals of foreigners coming in to get rid of prejudices and add "wrinkles to their horns," while everything is cheapened, and, best of all, knowledge is increased by this healthy —though, it may be, rather rapid—moving about of men and women.

Thus railways have created travellers and traffic. But they have done much more ; they

have turned roadside inns into "grand hotels;" they have clambered up on the world's heights, and built palatial abodes on the home of the mountain-hare and the eagle, where weak and worn invalids may mount without exertion, and drink in health and happiness with the freshest air of heaven; they have planted churches in the wilderness, and carried the Gospel of life and light and love to regions where death and darkness reigned before.

"But," says the objector, "you speak of what railways can do in populous lands. Colonial South Africa is not populous. All its inhabitants, white and black put together, are only about two and a quarter millions, which is not much more than half the population of London!"

That is true,—a truth that it is difficult to realise,—but that does not touch the principle that the creation of railways between great centres of industry has a direct tendency to stimulate that industry and to create other subsidiary industries with their concomitant travellers on business and travellers for pleasure. If railways ran over the Karroo, adventurous capitalists would come from all ends of the earth to see it; they would buy land when they found a convenient mode of

running their produce to the markets of the large towns and the ports on the coast; they would start ostrich farms and breed horses, and grow wool, and build mighty dams, and sink artesian wells, as the French have done with some success I believe in Algiers. If railways were run up to the diamond-fields, adventurous diggers would crowd in hundreds to the great pit of Kimberly; some would succeed; those who failed would gravitate into the positions for which they were fitted by nature in a land where the want of labourers is a confessedly perplexing evil. The population would not only be increased by much new blood from without, but by that which results from prosperity and wealth within; off-shoot, and as yet unimagined, enterprises would probably become numerous; additional lines would be pushed on into the gold regions; all sorts of precious gems and minerals, including "black diamonds," are known to be abundant in the Transvaal, and,—but why go on? Those who agree with me understand these matters so well as to require no urging. As for those who don't agree :—

"The man convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still."

What I have written is for the benefit of those who know little or nothing about South Africa. I will only add to it my own conviction that the day is not far distant when a Cape man will breakfast one morning in Capetown, and dine next day at Port Elizabeth (510 miles), run on to Grahamstown (84 miles) to sup with a friend there ; take the early train to Graaff-Reinet (160 miles), so as to have time for luncheon and a chat with a reverend cousin of the Dutch Reformed Church, before the starting of the night train for Kimberly (280 miles), where he has to assist at the marriage of a sister with a diamond digger who intends to spend his honeymoon at the Cliff Hotel amid the romantic scenery of the Catberg, and finish off with a week or two at Snowy Retreat, a magnificent hotel (yet to be) on the tip-top of the Compassberg mountain.

This brings me back to the point at which I diverged—the Great Fish River, which takes its rise in the Sneewberg range.

What tremendous floods are implied in the carrying away of this bridge! what superabundance of water in that so-called land of drought! What opportunities for engineering skill to catch and conserve the water, and turn the "barren

land" into fruitful fields! Don't you see this, Periwinkle? If not, I will say no more, for, according to the proverb, "a nod is as good as a wink to the blind horse."

Having crossed the bridge in safety we continued our journey in the new vehicle with fresh horses, and reached Grahamstown at four in the afternoon.

Between sixty and seventy years is not a great age for a city. Indeed, as cities go, Grahamstown may be called quite infantile. Nevertheless this youthful city has seen much rough work in its brief career.

Grahamstown was born in smoke, and cradled in war's alarms. It began life in 1812, at which time the thieving and incorrigible Kafirs were driven across the Great Fish River—then the colonial boundary—by a strong force of British and Burgher troops under Colonel Graham. During these disturbed times it was established as headquarters of the troops which guarded the frontier.

When the infant was seven years old its courage and capacity were severely put to the proof. In the year 1818-19—just before the arrival of the "British settlers,"—it was deemed

necessary to interfere in the concerns of contending Kafir chiefs, and to punish certain tribes for their continued depredations on the colony. For these ends, as well as the recovery of stolen cattle, a strong force was sent into Kafirland. While the troops were absent a body of Kafirs assembled in the bush of the Great Fish River, from which they issued to attack Grahamstown. They were led by a remarkable man named Makana. He was also styled the Lynx.

This Kafir, although not a chief, rose to power by the force of a superior intellect and a strong will. It is said that he was descended from an unfortunate European female who was wrecked on the coast, and fell into the hands of the savages. He was well known in Grahamstown, having been in the habit of paying it frequent visits, on which occasions he evinced great curiosity on all subjects, speculative as well as practical, and used to take special delight in holding converse with the chaplain, Mr. Van der Lingen, on Christianity, puzzling him with subtle objections and metaphysical queries.

Makana appears to have been an apt scholar, for he soon became quite learned on the fall, the atonement, the resurrection, and other Christian

doctrines, but instead of embracing the faith about which he inquired so earnestly, he combined what he had learned of Christianity with the superstitions of his race, framed an extravagant religion of his own, and boldly announced himself a teacher and prophet inspired of Heaven. He even went so far as to style himself the "brother of Christ."

Being a man of eloquence as well as originality, he soon acquired ascendency over most of the great chiefs of Kafirland, was almost worshipped by the people, who acknowledged him a warrior-chief as well as a prophet, and collected around him a large body of retainers. It has been thought by some that Makana was a "noble" savage, and that although he imposed on the credulity of his countrymen, his aim was to raise himself to sovereign power in order to elevate the Kafir race nearer to a level with Europeans. Certain it is that he puzzled the missionaries, who did not feel sure whether this "Lynx" were a sly dog, or a mistaken enthusiast.

But whatever be the truth on that point, the invasion of Kafirland by the white men gave Makana an opportunity of which he was not slow to avail himself. His followers had suffered, with

others, from the proceedings of the troops, and his soul was fired with a desire to be revenged and "drive the white men into the sea,"—a favourite fate, in the Kafir mind, reserved for the entire colonial family!

Makana was general enough to perceive that nothing effective could be accomplished by the mere marauding habits to which his countrymen were addicted. He had learned, or knew intuitively, that "union is strength," and, making use of his spirit-rousing power of eloquence, went about endeavouring to concentrate the aims of the savages and to direct their energies. In these efforts he was in some measure successful. He pretended to have received heavenly revelations, and to have been sent by the great spirit to avenge their wrongs; predicted certain success to the enterprise if his followers only yielded implicit obedience to his commands, and thus managed to persuade most of the various clans to unite their forces for a simultaneous attack on the head-quarters of the British troops. He told them that he had power to call from their graves the spirits of their ancestors to assist them in the war, and confidently affirmed that it was decreed that they were to drive the white men across the

Zwartkops River into the ocean, after which they should "sit down and eat honey!"

Early on the morning of the 22d April 1819 this singular man led his force of 9000 sable warriors towards Grahamstown, and the affair had been conducted with so great secrecy that the few troops there were almost taken by surprise.

Enemies in the camp are always to be more dreaded than open foes. Makana had taken care to provide himself with a spy and informer, in the person of Klaas Nuka, the Government Interpreter to Colonel Wilshire, who was at that time in command of the troops. Three days previous to the attack this villain—well aware of Makana's approach—informed the Colonel that Kafirs had been seen in the precisely opposite direction. The unsuspecting Colonel at once fell into the trap. He detached the light company of the 38th regiment to patrol in the direction pointed out. Thus was the garrison of the town, which consisted of 450 European soldiers and a small body of mounted Hottentots, weakened to the extent of 100 men.

On that same April morning Colonel Wilshire was quietly inspecting a detachment of the mounted Cape Corps, when the Hottentot Captain

Boezac, chief of a band of buffalo-hunters, informed him that he had just received information of Makana's advance. The Colonel, mounted on a fleet charger, at once rode off with an escort of ten men to reconnoitre. He came unexpectedly on the enemy in a ravine not far from the town. They were taking a rest before rushing to the assault, and so sure were these poor savages of their irresistible power, that thousands of their wives and children followed them with their mats, pots, and cooking-jars ready to take possession of the place!

Colonel Wilshire retreated instantly, and there was need for haste. The Kafirs pursued him so closely that he reached his troops only a few minutes before them.

The small band of defenders more than made up for the difference in numbers, by the deadly precision of their fire. The Kafirs came on in a dense sable mass, led by their various chiefs, and generalled by the Lynx, who had impressed his followers with the belief that the muskets of the foe were charged only with "hot water!"

The field pieces of the troops were loaded with shrapnel shells, which at the first discharge mowed long lanes in the advancing masses, while

musketry was discharged with deadly effect. But Kafirs are stern and brave warriors. On they came with wild cries, sending a shower of short spears (assagais) before them, which however fell short. Regardless of the havoc in their ranks, they still came on, and the foremost men were seen to break short their assagais, with the evident intention of using them more effectively as daggers in hand-to-hand conflict. This was deliberately done by Makana's orders, and showed his wisdom, for, with the great bodily strength, size, and agility of the Kafirs, and their overwhelming numbers, the attack, if promptly and boldly made at close quarters, could not have failed of success.

But the God of battles had willed it otherwise. At this critical moment the Hottentot Captain Boezac created a diversion. He rushed with his band of a hundred and thirty men to meet the foe. These buffalo-hunters had among them some of the coolest and best marksmen in the country. Singling out the boldest of those who advanced, and were encouraging their followers in the final charge, Boezac and his men laid low many of the bravest chiefs and warriors. This gave the Kafirs a decided check. The troops

cheered and fired with redoubled speed and energy. Lieutenant Aitcheson of the Artillery plied the foe with a withering fire of grapeshot. Boezac and his hunters, turning their flank, pressed them hotly in rear, and the Hottentot cavalry charged. The Kafirs recoiled, though some of the boldest, scorning to give in, rushed madly among the soldiers, and perished fighting. Then a wild panic and a total rout ensued, and the great host was scattered like chaff, and driven into the ravines.

Brief though this fight had been, the carnage among the Kafirs was terrible. One who was an eye-witness of the fight* tells us that the bodies of about 2000 Kafir warriors strewed the field of battle, and that many others perished of their wounds in the rivulet leading down to the Cape Corps' barracks. Nuka, the faithless Interpreter, was shot, but Makana escaped.

A few months afterwards, however, he delivered himself up, and the other chiefs sued for peace. With Makana's surrender the war of 1819 ended. The Lynx himself was sent prisoner to Robben

* C. L. Stretch, Esq., of Somerset East,—from whose graphic paper, in the May number (1876) of the *Cape Monthly Magazine*, I have gathered this narrative.

Island. After nearly two years' confinement he attempted to escape in a boat with some other prisoners, but the boat was upset in the surf on Blueberg beach, and Makana was drowned, while his companions escaped.

As Grahamstown grew in years and size, she bore her part well, both in the suffering and the action which the colony has been called on to endure and undertake, during all the vicissitudes of its career—in peace and in war. What that part has been would take a volume to tell.

She is now a large and beautiful town—the capital of the Eastern Province—situated on the slopes of the Zuurberg range, near the head waters of the Kowie River, 1760 feet above the sea, and 36 miles distant therefrom. She is also the focus where all the roads from the interior converge to enter the only available gap through the mountains—Howison's Poort.

Very pleasant to dwell in is this "City of the Settlers"—*alias* the "city of gardens," with its agreeable society, fresh breezes, and charming situation; its "twenty miles" of well-gravelled and tree-lined streets; its handsome shops and stores, its fine public buildings—notably the

Cathedral, and the Albany Hall—its three great reservoirs, with their "twenty-four million gallons" of water, and its "twelve miles" of main pipes, by means of which its ten thousand, more or less, inhabitants are watered. These are also watered, spiritually, by a Bishop and a Dean, and ministers of nearly all the Colonial churches. They are kept in order, physically, by a High Court of Judicature, with its judges, solicitor-general, clerks and practitioners, and they are irrigated intellectually by numerous excellent schools, by a public library and reading-room, with about "seven thousand" volumes, by a good public museum, and last, but not least, by three newspapers—the *Journal*, the *Eastern Star*, and the *Penny Mail*,—which pour their streams, not only over the town, but over the colony, in crystal purity—save when they chance to flow into one another and effervesce!

The first of these papers, the *Journal*, is the oldest, and was started by the "Honourable" Robert Godlonton, of whom it is justly said that he "has grown grey in the service of the Eastern Frontier inhabitants; and, from the first day of his appearance as a journalist, has with a perseverance unwearied, though often single-handed,

maintained the rights, and urged redress for the wrongs, of his fellow-settlers."

But I must not linger in Grahamstown now. When there in the body, I was sorely tempted to do so, too long, by the kindness of friends and the salubrity of the weather. Yet I would not pass away from it without recording my debt of gratitude to the family of the Rev. Mr. Tyson for their kind hospitality, and to Mr. Roberts, on whose fat pony I was privileged to gallop over the beautiful surroundings of the place, far and near. Adieu, Grahamstown! thou art a green spot in memory, as well as in reality.

LETTER X.

SALEM—A PECULIAR PIC-NIC—POLO UNDER DIFFICULTIES—LECTURING AND SINGING—SPORTING AT NIGHT.

SALEM is, as it should be, a peaceful spot. It was not always so. There was a time when its inhabitants had to toil, so to speak, with the spade in one hand, and the musket in the other. It lies in a hollow of the great rolling plains, and was founded, like many of the eastern towns, in the memorable "1820," when the "British settlers" came out, and a new era for the colony began. It has not grown much, however, since those days, being still a scattered little village, with its old church in which some of the pilgrim-fathers of South Africa met to worship God, and its new church, in which, at the time of my visit, the Gospel of peace and good-will was preached eloquently and faithfully by a personal friend.

On the phosphorescent ocean in the fleet-steaming "Windsor Castle," I made, as already men-

tioned, the friendship of a broad-shouldered, tall strapping man, who might have been a splendid Guardsman, and who was blessed with a sweet wife and four pretty children, namely, the Rev. William Caldecott, of the Wesleyan Church. It was for the purpose of paying him, and his, a visit that I turned my wandering steps towards the Salem Flats.

The arrival of the original settlers at Salem is thus described in the *Story of my Mission* by one who was a noted leader in the first days—the Rev. William Shaw :—

"Our Dutch wagon-driver intimating that we had at length reached our proper location, we took our boxes out of the wagon, and placed them on the ground. He bade us *goeden dag*, or farewell, cracked his long whip, and drove away, leaving us to our reflections. My wife sat down on one box, and I on another. The beautiful blue sky was above us, and the green grass beneath our feet. We looked at each other for a few moments, indulged in some reflections, and perhaps exchanged a few sentences; but it was no time for sentiment, and hence we were soon engaged in pitching our tent, and when that was

accomplished, we removed into it our trunks and bedding. All the other settlers who arrived with us were similarly engaged, and in a comparatively short time the somewhat extensive valley of that part of the Assagai Bush River, which was to be the site of our future village, presented a lively and picturesque appearance."

Soon the spade, the plough, and the axe began their subduing work. Some of the beautiful grassy slopes were turned up. Small clearings were made in the bush. Frail huts with doors of matting and windows of calico began to arise. Lime was found, white-wash was applied, and the huts began to "smile." So did the waters of the stream when partially shorn of the bush-moustache by which, from time immemorial, they had been partially concealed; the first crops were sown, and the work of civilisation began. There was a ruinous "wattle and dab" edifice which had been deserted by a Dutch Boer before the arrival of the settlers. This was converted into a church, town-hall, and lying-in hospital.

The yell of the Kafir and the whizzing assagai afterwards disturbed the peace of Salem, and at that time the settlers proved that, though on peaceful plans intent, they could valorously hold

their own ; but it was peaceful enough, and beautiful, when I first beheld it.

At the door of a moderately handsome residence —which had succeeded the wattle-and-dab style of thing—I was heartily welcomed by my friend and his amiable spouse. Here I was introduced to two of the descendants of the 1820 "fathers"—two belles of Albany ; some of whom, by the way, are quite on a par in every respect with the belles of Albion, and of whose eyes and smiles I could say much, were it not that I fear to give offence. Here, too, I had the pleasure of enjoying a South African pic-nic.

A pic-nic is at all times interesting, doubly so when undertaken in peculiar circumstances. One of the peculiarities of this pic-nic was that the invitation to it was publicly given, and embraced the entire population. Another peculiarity was that the population, almost in its entirety, accepted the invitation. But there were still other peculiarities which will appear in the sequel.

The morning of the day fixed was bright and beautiful. This, indeed, was no peculiarity. Most of the mornings, days, and nights in that splendid region were of much the same stamp at that time. The spot fixed on for the scene of the

pic-nic was about six miles from Salem, where a wild buffalo had been killed the week before.

The killing of this buffalo was an "event," for that wild denizen of the African Bush had long ago retired before the rifle of the settler to safer retreats, and rarely returned to his old haunts. A band of buffaloes, however, had apparently taken a fancy to revisit the home of their childhood at this time. There was nothing to prevent them, for, although the country is "settled," the original "Bush" is in many places sufficiently extensive and impervious to afford safe shelter to the wildest of animals. At all events, a band of buffaloes did come to the neighbourhood of Salem, and there met with a farmer-Nimrod, who "picked off" one of their number. I turned aside, during one of my rides, to visit the head and horns, which lay near his house.

The place of rendezvous for those who dwelt in the village was an open space in front of the church. Here, at an early hour, there assembled numerous equestrians, as well as vehicles of varied shape and character. I was mounted on a smart brown pony kindly lent by Mr. Shaw, teacher of the flourishing school of Salem. My friend Caldecott bestrode a powerful steed suited to his size.

When the gathering had reached considerable proportions, we started like an Eastern caravan.

Among the cavaliers there were stalwart men and fair damsels—also little boys and girls, prancing in anxiety to get away. There were carts, and gigs, and buggies, or things that bore some resemblance to such vehicles, in which were the more sedate ones of the gathering; and there were great "Cape wagons," with fifteen or twenty oxen to each, containing whole families—from hale old "grannies" down to grannies' weaknesses in the shape of healthy lumps of live lard clad in amazement and bibs. It was a truly grand procession, as, after toiling up the slope that leads from the valley of Salem, we debouched upon the wide plain, and assumed our relative positions—that is, the riders dashed away at speed, the carts and buggies, getting up steam, pushed on, and the oxen trailed along at their unalterable gait, so that, in a few minutes, the dense group spread into a moving mass which gradually drew itself out into an attenuated line, whereof the head ultimately became invisible to the tail.

My tall host led the way with that same enthusiastic vigour which he was wont to display in leading our thoughts theologically from the

pulpit. He was a hearty, earnest man, who could turn quickly from the pleasant contemplation of the trivialities of life to the deep and serious consideration of the things that bear on the life to come. As far as I could judge, religion was always "in" and never "out of season" with him.

One Sunday I rode over the plains with him to visit a native church in which it was his duty to conduct worship. The congregation was black and woolly-headed—Hottentots chiefly, I believe, though there may have been some Kafirs amongst them.

There is something very attractive to me in the bright, eager, childlike look of black men and women. The said look may be the genuine expression of feeling—it may be, for aught I can tell, the result of contrast between the dazzling whites of eyes and teeth, with liquid-black pupils and swarthy cheeks,—but that does not alter the fact that it is pleasant. There was a good deal of sighing and groaning. My friend the pastor did not sigh or groan. He spoke out like a man, with firm lip and strong voice, and earnest eye; but the people groaned. Why not? they had fully as much cause to do so as civilised people. I do not uphold groaning. I never do it myself—in public,

—but if I were bound to one of two courses, I would rather groan with the weakest Hottentot in South Africa than sit in frigid and callous propriety with self-possessed formalists at home. Of the two the Hottentot has the best of it, for if he *is* a hypocrite (which we cannot tell) he has ignorance to palliate his hypocritical humility, while the formalists' intelligence and common sense render highly culpable their dignified Sunday-assertion that they are "miserable sinners."

Pray observe here that I refer not to Christians, white or black, but to hypocrites, and the two modes by which such are in the habit of expressing themselves. The groan of the genuine black man and the silence of the true white are, I have no doubt, equally eloquent in the ear of God.

The Hottentot who translated my friend's discourse, sentence by sentence, was a fine specimen —I won't say of his race, but—of humanity. He was full of intelligence and fire; caught the preacher's meaning instantly, riveted with his glittering eye the attention of his audience, and rattled out his words with a vehemence that was most impressive, and with the interspersion of those incomprehensible and indescribable "clicks" with which the native language abounds. What-

ever might be said about the non-success of missions, it would be unphilosophical to suppose that the benign influence and wholesome teachings of my friend went for nothing—as too many think, and some say; besides, it is enough for believers that they have the command to go and preach, and the assurance that their "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

After the service we remounted our horses and galloped to a distant farm, where a little child was baptized. Alas! not many days after, I heard that the little one had been taken from the poor parents—who were so proud of it that day—and admitted to the Church above.

But to return to the pic-nic.

As we advanced, groups and couples of cavaliers and carts and wagons joined the line of march from outlying farms, so that when we reached the rendezvous we must have formed a body of two hundred strong, or more.

The spot chosen was the summit of a woody knoll, from which we could survey all the country round, and look down upon the river with its miles and miles of dense bush, in which the buffaloes had vainly fancied themselves free from the danger of human foes.

Was there plenty of food at that pic-nic? I should think there was. South Africans do not live upon air, by any means—though air has a good deal to do with their living. These comely maidens and strapping boys had not been brought up on water-gruel. These powerful men and ruddy matrons, to say nothing of the aged and the juvenile, would not have gone to that knoll on the plain without a prospect of "strong meat" of some sort. There were pies and joints, buns and beef, cakes and coffee, tea and tongues, sugar and sandwiches, hams and hampers, mounds of mealies, oceans of milk, and baskets of bread and butter. I'm not sure whether there were wines or spirits. I culpably forget. Probably there were not, for "Good Templars" are powerful in that region, and so is temperance.

Did we do justice to the viands? Didn't we? My notions of human capacity were enlarged that day. So was my own capacity—out of sympathy, coupled with the ride. But we did not linger over our food. Seated in groups near the margin of, and partly in, the bush, we refreshed ourselves in comparative silence. Then we grew noisy over our milk and tea. Some of us even got the length of singing and speech-making, but the younger

POLO ON THE PLAINS.—Page 166.

portion of the band soon lost their appetites and dispersed—some to romp, some to ramble, others to engage in games.

A few of the more reckless among us extemporised a game of polo.

Many people know, though some may not, that this is a game played on horseback with a club and ball—a species of equestrian "hockey," as it is styled in England, "shinty" in Scotland. To be well done it requires good and trained horses, a wide expanse of level country, and expert riders. Our state of preparation for the game may be understood when I say that we had indifferent and untrained horses, that the ground was very uneven and covered with huge ant-hills, while the riders were not expert—at least, not at polo.

We got sticks, however, and went at it. Half a dozen men cut and levelled several ant-hills, and, marking off a square patch of ground, four of us—I won't say who—were placed, one at each corner, while the ball, a football, was put in the middle of the square.

Our innocent horses stood quietly there till the signal was given to start. Then each cavalier essayed to reach the ball first. The sudden urging of the steeds to instant action seemed to

confuse them. They did not spring, as they should have done like arrows from bows. One rider wildly kicked with his heels and shook his reins. The horse turned round, as if in contempt, from the ball. Another applied his whip with vehemence, but his horse only backed. A third shouted, having neither whip nor spur, and brought his polo-stick savagely down on his animal's flank, but it plunged and reared. The only horse that behaved well was that of a gallant youth who wore spurs. A dig from these sent him into the field. He reached the ball, made a glorious blow at it, and hit the terrestrial ball by mistake. Before the mistake could be rectified three of the other players were up, flourishing their long clubs in reckless eagerness; the fourth rode into them; the horses then lost patience and refused obedience to orders—no wonder, for one club, aimed at the ball, fell on a horse's shins, while another saluted a horse's ear. Presently the ball spurted out from the midst of us; the horses scattered, and one was seen to rise on its hind legs. Immediately thereafter one of the players—I won't say which—was on the ground and his horse was careering over the plain! Regardless of this the other three charged, met in the shock of conflict; clubs

met clubs, and ears, and shins—but not the ball —until finally an accidental kick, from one of the horses I think, sent it towards the boundary at a considerable distance from the players.

Then it was that the power of spurs became conspicuously apparent. While two of the champions backed and reared, the gallant youth with the armed heels made a vigorous rush at the ball, miraculously hit it, and triumphantly won the game.

On the whole it was a failure in one sense, but a great success in another, inasmuch as it afforded immense amusement to the spectators, and pleasant excitement as well as exercise to the performers.

It must not be supposed, however, that the energies of the whole pic-nic were concentrated on polo. The party, as I have said, had broken up into groups, one of which played hide-and-seek among the bushes on the knoll, while another engaged in a game which involved sitting in a circle, changing places, frequent collisions, constant mistakes on the part of the ignorant, and shouts of laughter with rectifying advice on the part of the knowing.

All this time the sun was glowing as only a

South-African summer sun can glow, in a cloudless sky, and it was not until that sun had become red in the face, and sunk far down into the west, that the panting, but far from exhausted revellers saddled up and inspanned, and began to quit the scene.

Then it was, as my friend and I stood on the bush-topped knoll, that the magnificence of our pic-nic fully impressed us, for, as we surveyed the long line of curvetting riders, and trundling carts, and gigs, and curricles, and heavy Cape wagons with their creeping teams winding over the plain, the head of the column was seen almost on the horizon before the rear-guard had left the scene of our festivities. This was altogether one of the pleasantest days I had spent in the colony, the people were so hearty and vigorous, so varied in appearance, character, and age, so full of life and fun and good-will.

But it is not always in the sunshine that the good people of Salem enjoy themselves. The hunters among them occasionally go out shooting at night with the aid of a dark lantern, and the wretched creature which they pursue on such occasions is called a spring-hare. It seems a mixture of the hare and the kangaroo—its size

and aspect being those of the former animal, while its long hind legs and its action in springing resemble the latter. In running it does not use its fore legs, but bounds like the kangaroo.

Never having engaged in night-sporting—save in dreams—I agreed to accompany two Salem Nimrods on a hunt after spring-hares. The night fixed for the hunt was that on which my host had arranged to deliver a lecture in the church on the great revival of religion that had recently occurred in England, and at which I had engaged to assist a choir in singing Mr. Sankey's beautiful hymns, but the lecture and the hunt did not clash, as the latter could be commenced at any hour of the night.

The fair ones of South Africa are gifted with much musical talent, and assuredly those of Salem had specially sweet and true voices. It was quite a treat to hear them sing those vigorous and cheery hymns during the intervals of Caldecott's most interesting lecture. Whether the men of Salem cannot or won't sing I know not, but I found myself in the awkward position of being the only male singer in the choir. Bass was demanded of me. What of voice I possess is barytone. Fortunately I also possessed a slight

cold at the time which greatly improved the depth of my voice, if not its quality. Happily, also, it was drowned by the magnificent altos, sopranos, and contraltos around.

After the lecture I supped with the Nimrods of the night, and after supper we shouldered our guns and sallied forth into outer darkness.

We went into the fields. That is all I can vouch for. It happened to be so dark that we might as well have been groping about in a coal-pit. My companions, however, knew the ground, which was fortunate, for walking over a rugged surface in the dark is not only confusing, but trying to the nerves, to say nothing of the temper. I followed faithfully and "close to heel," like a well-trained dog.

"This way, Sir; mind the ditch."

"Where? ah! all ri—*ight!*"

The last syllable was shot out of me like a bullet as I plunged into the ditch.

The Nimrod who carried the lantern opened the slide for a moment, revealed the rugged nature of the ground, and closed it when I had risen.

"It's better farther on," he said, encouragingly.

"Is it? Ah, that's well."

We came to a piece of ground which my feet

and legs told me was covered with long rough grass and occasional bushes. Over this we stumbled, and here the rays of the lantern were directed far in advance of us, so as to sweep slowly round, bringing bushes, and grassy tufts, and stumps, and clods, into spectral view for a moment as the focus of light moved on.

"We never see their bodies," said the lantern-bearer, slowly, as he peered earnestly in front, "we only see the sparkle of one eye when the light falls on it, and—then—we—fire—at—*there*, that's one! Look, don't you see his eye? Fire, Sir, fire!"

I raised my gun, and looked eagerly with all my eyes, but saw nothing. Never having been in the habit of firing at *nothing*, I hesitated.

"Ah, he's gone! Never mind, we'll soon see another."

We stumbled on, again. The surrounding gloom depressed me, but I revived under the influence of one or two false alarms, and a severe plunge into a deepish hole.

"There he is again, quite near," whispered my light-bearer.

"Aim for the eye," whispered the other.

The whispering, and intense silence that fol-

lowed, coupled with the gloom, made me feel guilty. I saw nothing, but tried so hard to do so that I persuaded myself that I did, and attempted to aim.

"The sights of the gun are invisible," I whispered somewhat testily.

Without a word the lantern was raised until the light glittered on the barrels. Then I saw nothing whatever except the gun! In sheer desperation I pulled the trigger. The tremendous appearance in the dark of the sheet of flame that belched forth, and the crash of the report in the silent night, gave me quite new ideas as to fire-arms.

"You 've missed," said the light-bearer.

As I had fired at *nothing* I felt inclined to reply that I had *hit*—but refrained.

Again we stumbled on, and I began to grow melancholy, when another "there he goes," brought me to the "ready," with eager eyes.

I saw it clearly enough this time. A diamond was sparkling in the blackness before me. I aimed and fired. There was a squeal and a rush. Instantly my friends dashed off in wild pursuit and I stood listening, not daring to move for fear of ditches. The sounds of leaping, stumbling,

and crashing, came to me on the night air for a few minutes, then my friends returned with the light, and with a poor little spring-hare's lifeless and long-hind-legged body.

With this trophy I returned home, resolved never more to go hunting at night.

Many pleasant excursions, visits, and rides had I while at Salem: space forbids a record of these, yet I would not pass in total silence the beautiful "Ghio." This is a romantic spot near the broad waters of Bushman's River, where Mr. Shaw, a retired Wesleyan clergyman, spends the evening of his days in taking charge of and educating a number of boys, and where his amiable wife and fair daughter received us with genuine hospitality.

The house is the only one in the immediate neighbourhood, and, despite the beauty of the place, I could not help thinking that the Ghio must have been an uncomfortable residence in those early days when the colony was liable to be overrun by Kafir hordes.

LETTER XI.

ALGOA BAY—KAFIRS ON THE COAST—DIFFICULTIES REGARDING SERVANTS, ETC.

STANDING on the shores of Algoa Bay, with the "Liverpool of South Africa"—Port Elizabeth—at my back, I attempted to realise what must have been the scene, in the memorable "1820," when the flourishing city was yet unborn, when the whole land was a veritable wilderness, and the sands on which the port now stands were covered with the tents of the "settlers."

Some of the surroundings, thought I, are pretty much as they were in those days. The shipping at anchor in the offing must resemble the shipping that conveyed the emigrants across the sea—except, of course, these two giant steamers of the "Donald Currie" and the "Union" lines. The bright blue sky, too, and the fiery sun are the same, and so are those magnificent "rollers,"

which, rising, one scarce can tell when or where, out of a dead-calm sea, stand up for a few seconds like liquid walls, and then rush up the beach with a magnificent roar.

As I gazed, the scene was rendered still more real by the approach from seaward of a great surf-boat, similar to the surf-boats that brought the settlers from their respective ships to the shore. Such boats are still used at the port to land goods —and also passengers, when the breakers are too high to admit of their being landed in small boats at the wooden pier. The surf-boats are bulky, broad, and flat, strongly built to stand severe hammering on the sand, and comparatively shallow at the stern, to admit of their being backed towards the beach, or hauled off to sea through the surf by means of a rope over the bow.

As the surf-boat neared the shore, I heard voices behind me, and, turning round, beheld a sight which sent me completely back into the 1820 days. It was a band of gentlemen in black—black from the crowns of their heads to the soles of their feet, with the exception of their lips and teeth and eyes. Here was the Simon Pure in very truth. They were so-called Red Kafirs, because of their habit of painting their bodies and blankets

with red ochre. At this time the paint had been washed off, and the blankets laid aside. They were quite naked, fresh from the lands of their nativity, and apparently fit for anything.

Shade of Othello!—to say nothing of Apollo—what magnificent forms the fellows had, and what indescribably hideous faces! They were tall, muscular, broad-shouldered, small waisted and ankled, round-muscled, black-polished—in a word, elegantly powerful. Many of them might have stood as models for Hercules. Like superfine cloth, they were of various shades; some were brown-black, some almost blue-black, and many coal-black.

They were coming down to unload the surf-boat, and seemed full of fun, and sly childlike humour, as they walked, tripped, skipped and sidled into the water. At first I was greatly puzzled to account for the fact that all their heads and throats were wrapped up, or swathed, in dirty cloth. It seemed as if every man of them was under treatment for a bad cold. This I soon found was meant to serve as a protection to their naked skins from the sharp and rugged edges and corners of the casks and cases they had to carry.

The labour is rather severe, but is well paid, so

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that hundreds of Kafirs annually come down from their homes in the wilderness to work for a short time. They do not, I believe, make a profession of it. Fresh relays come every year. Each young fellow's object is to make enough money to purchase a gun and cattle, and a wife—or wives. As these articles cost little in Africa, a comparatively short attention to business, during one season, enables a man who left home a beggar to return with his fortune made! He marries, sets his wives to hoe the mealies and milk the cows, and thereafter takes life easy, except when he takes a fancy to hunt elephants, or to go to war for pastime. Ever after he is a drone in the world's bee-hive. Having no necessity he need not work, and possessing no principle he will not.

As the boat came surging in on the foam, these manly children waded out to meet her, throwing water at each other, and skylarking as they went. They treated the whole business in fact as a rather good jest, and although they toiled like heroes, they accompanied their work with such jovial looks, and hummed such lilting, free-and-easy airs the while, that it was difficult to associate their doings with anything like *labour*.

Soon the boat grounded, and the Kafirs

crowded round her, up to their waists sometimes in the water, and sometimes up to the arm-pits, when a bigger wave than usual came roaring in. The boat itself was so large that, as they stood beside it, their heads barely rose to a level with the gunwale. The boatmen at once began to heave and roll the goods over the side. The Kafirs received them on their heads or shoulders, according to the shape or size of each package—and they refused nothing. If a bale or a box chanced to be too heavy for one man, a comrade lent assistance; if it proved still too heavy, a third added his head or shoulder, and the box or bale was borne off.

One fellow, like a black Hercules, put his wrapper on his head, and his head under a bale, which I thought would crush him down into the surf, but he walked ashore with an easy springing motion, that showed he possessed more than sufficient power. Another man, hitting Hercules a sounding smack as he went by, received a mighty cask on his caput that should have cracked it—but it didn't. Then I observed the boatmen place on the gunwale an enormous flat box, which seemed to me about ten feet square. It was corrugated iron, they told me, of, I

forget how many hundredweight. A crowd of Kafirs got under it, and carried it ashore as easily as if it had been a butterfly. But this was nothing to a box which next made its appearance from the bowels of that capacious boat. It was in the form of a cube, and must have measured nine or ten feet in all directions. Its contents I never ascertained, but the difficulty with which the boatmen got it rested on the side of the boat proved its weight to be worthy of its size. To get it on the shoulders of the Kafirs was the next difficulty. It was done by degrees. As the huge case was pushed over the edge, Kafir after Kafir put his head or shoulder to it, until there were, I think, from fifteen to twenty men beneath the weight ;—then, slowly, it left the boat, and began to move towards the shore.

Assuredly, if four or five of these men had stumbled at the same moment, the others would have been crushed to death, but not a man stumbled. They came ashore with a slow, regular, almost dancing gait, humming a low monotonous chant, as if to enable them to step in time, and making serio-comic motions with arms and hands, until they deposited safely in a cart a weight that might have tested Atlas himself!

It seemed obvious that these wild men (for such they truly were) had been gifted with all the powers that most white men lay claim to, —vigour, muscle, energy, pluck, fun, humour, resolution. Only Christian principle is wanted to make them a respectable and useful portion of the human family. Like all the rest of us they are keenly alive to the influence of kindness and affection. Of course if your kindness, forbearance, or affection, take the form of action which leads them to think that you are afraid of them, they will merely esteem you cunning, and treat you accordingly ; but if you convince a Kafir, or any other savage, that you have a disinterested regard for him, you are sure to find him grateful, more or less.

One Christian family with which I dined gave me to understand that this was the result of their own experience. At that very time they had a Kafir girl in training as a housemaid. Servants, let me remark in passing, are a Cape-colonial difficulty. The demand is in excess of the supply, and the supply is not altogether what it should be, besides being dear and uncomfortably independent. I suppose it was because of this difficulty that the family I dined with had pro-

cured a half-wild Kafir girl, and undertaken her training.

Her clothes hung upon her in a manner that suggested novelty. It was evident that she would have preferred to serve naked, had that been admissible. She was young, very tall, black as Erebus, lithe as an eel, strong as a horse. She was obviously new to the work, and went about it with the air of one who engages in a frolic. But the free air of the wilderness had taught her a freedom of action and stride, and a fling of body that it was not easy to restrain within the confined precincts of a dining-room. She gyrated round the table like a sable panther—ready to spring when wanted. She had an open-mouthed smile of amused good-will, and an open-eyed "what-next-only-say-quick-and-I'll-do-it" expression that was impressive. She seized the plates and dishes and bore them off with a giraffe-like, high-stepping action that was quite alarming, but she broke or spilt nothing. To say that she flung about, would be mild. It would not have been incongruous, I thought—only a little extra dash in her jubilant method of proceeding—if she had gone head-foremost through the dining-room window for the sake of bearing

the mutton round by a shorter route to the kitchen.

The family expected that this girl would be reduced to moderation, and rendered faithful —as she certainly was intelligent—by force of kindness in a short time.

Of course in a country thus circumstanced, there are bad servants. The independence of the Totties is most amusing—to those who do not suffer from it. I was told that servants out there have turned the tables on their employers, and instead of bringing "characters" with them, require to know the characters of master and mistress before they will engage. It is no uncommon thing for a domestic to come to you and say that she is tired and wants a rest, and is going off to see her mother. Indeed it is something to her credit if she takes the trouble to tell you. Sometimes she goes off without warning, leaving you to shift for yourself, returning perhaps after some days. If you find fault with her too severely on her return, she will probably leave you altogether.

This naturally tries the temper of high-spirited mistresses—as does also the incorrigible carelessness of some servants.

A gentle lady said to me quietly, one day, "I never keep a servant after slapping her!"

"Is it your habit to slap them?" I asked with a smile.

"No," she replied with an answering smile, "but occasionally I am driven to it. When a careless girl, who has been frequently cautioned, singes one's linen and destroys one's best dress, and melts one's teapot by putting it on the red-hot stove, what *can* flesh and blood do?"

I admitted that the supposed circumstances were trying.

"The last one I sent off," continued the lady, "had done all that. When she filled up her cup of iniquity by melting the tea-pot, I just gave her a good hearty slap on the face. I couldn't help it. Of course she left me after that."

I did not doubt it, for the lady was not only gentle in her manner, and pretty to boot, but was tall and stout, and her fair arm was strong, and must have been heavy.

LETTER XII.

PORT ELIZABETH—ALGOA BAY—DIAMONDS—KAFIR NOBILITY.

PORT ELIZABETH may be described as the first-born city of the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope. It came into being in 1820. It is now a flourishing seaport, full of energetic, busy, money-making men, with a population of above 15,000, an export trade (including diamonds) of at least three millions sterling per annum, imports of above two millions, and customs dues of more than a quarter of a million. It is the principal seaport of the Eastern Province, and the nearest point on the coast to the Diamond-fields—420 miles from De Beer's New Rush, a distance which is traversed in about six days by Cobb and Co.'s coaches.

Is it of any use to tell you that this flourishing town is fortunate in the possession of a town-hall, post-office, banks, churches, etc. etc.? I think not. Every flourishing town has the same tale

to tell; but it is well worthy of particular note that the town has a capital and extensive free public library, three bi-weekly newspapers, and an excellent educational establishment, styled the Grey Institute, where the youth of the town receive a thorough training at extremely moderate rates.

Besides possessing the largest hall in the colony, which holds upwards of a thousand people, Port Elizabeth has two beautiful and well-managed public parks, full of beautiful shrubs, trees, and flowering plants. In other respects its surroundings are not picturesque, but it can afford to leave "the beautiful" to other towns, seeing that it is so largely favoured with "the useful."

Among its other useful enterprises it has the honour of having sent out one pioneer of future commercial prosperity in the Eastern Province, for Port Elizabeth is the starting-point of one branch of that great railway system which is to revolutionise Africa. I do not say *South* Africa, but advisedly use the title of wider scope. The line of railway as yet has only crept, with the modest uncertainty of youth, some forty or fifty miles out of town, sending a timid but vigorous branch, thirteen miles long, to the town of Uiten-

hage, but when that line shall have grown to manhood, ramified the Eastern Province, shot out to the north-west, joined and shaken friendly hands with the healthy feelers of its elder brother, the railway system springing from Capetown, crossed the wild Karroo, rushed into the diamond regions of the Orange River, and invaded the gold fields of the Transvaal—when it shall have done all this, with missionaries, merchants, mechanics, and miners in its carriages, and bales, boxes and bibles in its vans, not only South Africa, but the whole continent, from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Storms, shall feel the mighty influence of truth and steam, and British stamina.

There is only one great eyesore in Port Elizabeth that I know of, and that is its grand pier. At enormous cost in money, time, and energy, its pier or breakwater was constructed. In a short time the inexorable sea silted up the sand so that the pier is now absolutely useless, and I suppose must ever remain so. This has been a great misfortune to the Port. Whether it is also a fault must be decided by those who are competent to form a judgment on the subject, but outsiders and comparatively ignorant persons must be forgiven if they cannot help reflecting that there is nothing

new in the idea of sand silting up; that ocean currents are known, even by the uninitiated, to act in pretty regular and recognised ways, and that engineers who undertake great works ought to be intimately acquainted with such things.

It is not every day that one can boast of having handled a tumbler full of diamonds. Being anxious to see a mass of those precious gems in an uncut condition, I appealed to my friend Mr. Mitchel, a banker, who had come out with me in the "Windsor Castle," and who, by inviting me to dine with himself and his kindred at Uitenhage on Christmas Day, saved me from the forlorn fate of dining at a *table-d'hôte* at a time when men are wont to meet and feast together.

He introduced me to a broker, who took me into a back office, opened a strong-box, took out a small packet, and, untying it, poured out a tumblerful of diamonds! They ranged from the size of a pin-head to that of a bean, and were varied in shade, from pure crystal to straw-colour. The broker then opened one or two separate parcels, each of which contained a specially large or fine diamond, varying in size from a pea to a hazel-nut.

"That one," he said, "may be worth four hun-

dred pounds; and this, perhaps about five or six hundred."

Looking at them, it was difficult to believe that they were other than paltry pebbles, yet these were the things for which men left home and kindred, pushed into the wilds of a savage land, toiled and moiled in the Great Pit at Kimberley, and too often sacrificed health, happiness, and life itself. Judging them from their looks, I would not have given sixpence for the entire lot—so true is it that we do wrong in judging uncut gems, as well as unknown men, by the "outward appearance."

A very striking, and rather unfortunate instance of this false style of judgment occurred not many days afterwards in reference to some Kafir princes and chiefs: it was on the occasion of my quitting Port Elizabeth for Capetown.

We were to have started on a Saturday afternoon, but a gale said "no," and we left on Sunday morning. Even then, although the gale had abated, a surf so magnificent was rolling into Algoa Bay that no ship's boat could approach the jetty. This obliged the passengers to go off to the steamer in a surf-boat. Of course the boat could not approach nearer the dry sand than fifty

yards or so. There she heaved about in oceans of boiling foam, while naked Kafirs carried us on board one by one. For the males among us this was fun—in regard to the females, it was at all events funny. The Kafirs bore the latter in their strong arms as children are carried, and put them over the gunwale tenderly, but the gentlemen were made to sit on their shoulders, as one sits on horseback, and were treated with less ceremony. A giant in ebony carried me off, and trotted as he went, to the delight of some of his comrades; but I was accustomed to riding, and patted his black head approvingly.

The boat was full of men, women, and children; white, black, and brown; clothed and semi-naked. There were a number of Kafir men (passengers) who would gladly have dispensed with clothing altogether, but the laws of the Colony forbid this in the presence of civilised life—except in the case of those who have to work in the surf. The laws, however, were not strictly carried out. One man, being carried on board by a brother-black, stepped down into the bottom of the boat with his trousers over his arm. He had taken them off for coolness as a man throws off his coat!

While standing on a commanding point in the

stern, a fellow-passenger directed attention to a group of Kafirs who tried to keep apart from the others, and looked dignified. These, he told me, were a party of native princes, chiefs, and councillors, who had been brought fresh from their wilderness home—with their own consent, of course—and were being taken to Capetown for the purpose of being impressed with the wealth, power, grandeur, and vast resources of the white man. The other Kafirs, of whom there was a large gang, were common fellows, who chanced to be going by the same steamer as navvies to work on the Western railways. The difference between the navvies and their nobility was not great. Personally there was scarcely any, and the somewhat superior cloth of the robes worn by the latter made no great show.

The big boat was hauled off by a rope through the surf, the sail set, and we were soon alongside the ocean steamer whose iron sides rose above us like a city wall. There was nothing but an iron ladder, flat against this wall, by which to ascend. The heaving of the surf-boat was great. It approached the ladder and retreated from it in the most irregularly spasmodic manner. Only active men, accustomed to such feats, could get upon it.

Kafirs, although active as kittens, are not accustomed to the sea, or to the motion of ships and boats. For them to ascend was a matter of great difficulty ; for the women and children it was impossible.

But the difficulty had been provided for. Presently we saw a great cask like an overgrown hogshead swing over the side and descend into the boat. It was caught by our sailors and placed on the stern-sheets. Several tars from the steamer descended to assist. The cask was large enough to hold three or four women besides a child or two. Amid much giggling and persuading it was filled, a signal given, steam applied, and the party was whirled aloft with a scream, and lowered on the vessel's deck in safety.

The cask was again sent down. Meanwhile some of us had scrambled up the ladder, and a few of the Kafir navvies followed our example, but the most of them required a good deal of encouragement, and some strong persuasion, while others refused flatly to attempt it. All this time the black aristocrats looked on in grave silence. If I remember rightly there were a young prince, an old councillor, and two or three chiefs.

When those navvies that could be persuaded,

or kicked up the ladder, had been disposed of, the sailors turned upon the timid ones and bundled them into the cask, neck and crop, four and five at a time. There was necessity for speed, and sailors are not wont to be delicate when this is the case. At last the aristocracy were approached. Whether the sailors knew who they were I cannot tell; it is probable that they did not, but judged by the "outward appearance." They were "niggers," that was enough for Jack.

"Come along, old boy," said one, grasping the old councillor; but the councillor held back; Jack therefore gave him a powerful shove and he went into the cask head-foremost. Another man had seized the young prince at the same moment. That potentate—who in his own land possessed the power of life and death—turned round with dignity, and in doing so afforded an unlooked for opportunity to the sailor, who pushed him gently till he tripped against the cask and went in backwards, squeezing the old councillor almost flat.

"That's your sort, Bill, fetch another!" cried Jack, as he packed the prince down.

One chief was quick-witted enough to submit and stepped in of his own accord. Another half-stepped and was half-thrust in.

"Hoist away!" shouted Bill.

At that moment a forgotten navvy caught Bill's eye, he seized him by the neck; Jack helped; the man was thrown on the top of all, and went up next moment like a spread-eagle cover to the cask.

When this "lot" was lowered four or five of the Jack-tars on deck, who greatly enjoyed the fun, turned it suddenly over, and thus it was emptied of its human contents.

Even at that moment of humiliation the savage chiefs were true to themselves. They rose from the deck in dignified silence, the prince merely saying, sternly, to the gentleman who had charge of the party, "Was *this* what you brought me here for?"

It is but just to add that the gentleman in charge of these noble visitors did his best to prevent the outrage, but it had occurred suddenly, in the exuberance of "Jack's" spirits, was over in a few seconds, and could not be undone.

These Kafir chiefs were afterwards feasted and fêted by the governor and gentry of Capetown, but I have my doubts whether they will ever forget or forgive the treatment received on that occasion in Algoa Bay.

To correct the false is more difficult than to imbibe the true. Did you ever think of that before? All my life have I been under the false impression that the Cape of Good Hope was the most southerly point of Africa. It is nothing of the sort. Cape Agulhas, not far distant, is the real extremity of South Africa. We doubled it on the 3d of April.

Oh! Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco da Gama, what would you say if you knew that we "doubled the Cape"—the "Cape of Storms"—the "Cape of Torments"—in calm and sunshine, at the rate of thirteen knots or thereabouts, without a stitch of canvas, with ladies and gentlemen in every attitude of lazy ease upon our deck, and troops of children romping round them? How vast the difference between the "doublings" of the 15th and the 19th centuries! Then—the ships were small wooden tubs; now they are huge iron kettles. Then,—a few bold and sometimes turbulent spirits faced the dangers of unknown seas under the leadership of famous and heroic men; now, hundreds of men and women—timid and brave mixed undistinguishably—are carried in safety and comfort over the well-known ocean, by respectable captains of whom the world knows

little or nothing beyond their names. Once in a lifetime was the daring feat attempted *then.* Once or twice a week is the trifling trip accomplished *now.*

But enough of moralising. Suffice it to say that we doubled the Cape without sails, without anxiety, without care, and with no triumph whatever,—but not without interest. Calm and sunny though it chanced to be, we could not look upon that barren, mountainous, rocky shore, without reflecting that it still is not less now than in days of old, the Stormy Cape, and that danger as appalling as that of yore may sometimes be encountered, while heroism quite as exalted as that of the ancient Portuguese navigators is sometimes displayed by modern Britons.

There is a point not far from Cape Agulhas—between it and the Cape of Good Hope—named Point Danger, where courage of the highest kind once calmly faced and fought with Death. On that Point, in February 1852, the *Birkenhead* was wrecked. It may be truly said that courage conquered on that occasion, because the end for which it fought was the deliverance of women and children from death, and this end was gained, though above 400 of the gallant men who

fought the battle perished in the hour of victory.

The *Birkenhead*, a large iron steamer, was engaged in the transport of troops to the frontier, where war with the Kafirs raged at the time. These troops were detachments from several regiments under command of Colonel Seton of the 74th Highlanders. About two o'clock in the morning the vessel struck upon a rock near the well-named Point Danger, and so tremendous was the shock that her iron plates were driven in as if made of egg-shell. The cabin was immediately flooded, and it was evident that in a few minutes the vessel would be engulfed among the breakers.

None but those who have witnessed similar scenes can imagine the horrors of the situation. It was dark; the breakers roared around; the rugged and almost inaccessible shores of the Cape of Storms were on the one hand, the ocean on the other; men, women, and children were rushing about the decks in wild terror; sharks were known to be in these waters, and *only two* of the ship's boats were available for service. In this moment of extremity God put it into the hearts of both officers and men to act with unexampled courage and wisdom.

To save all was manifestly out of the question. When people are in such circumstances it is too often "every man for himself;" the strong push aside the weak, fight for the boats, overcrowd and swamp them, and thus few, if any, are left to tell the tale. But it was not so with the heroes of the *Birkenhead*. At the word of command from Colonel Seton, the soldiers drew up on the reeling deck as if on parade, and obeyed his orders with steady, calm, unflinching bravery. If there were any selfish spirits on board they were overawed by the heroism of the soldiers. The Colonel directed that the women and children and the sick should be put into the boats. This was quickly done, and these were all saved without a single exception—to the number of two hundred souls.

But while this was being accomplished the vessel was breaking up, and the fact that the men would be soon left to struggle in the waves was apparent to all; yet the noble officer continued to give his orders, and the not less noble men continued to obey, and saw the boats depart without a murmur. They were young soldiers too, who had never been under fire, and this "action" was the first and last that they and their leader were

destined to fight. The vessel suddenly parted amidships, and though a few saved themselves by swimming and on floating pieces of wreck, the greater number perished—no fewer than 357 officers and soldiers—among whom was the Colonel—and sixty seamen, going down with the ship. It was a sad but splendid specimen of cool self-sacrificing courage, and of the power of discipline in moments of tremendous trial.

LETTER XIII.

THE "CAPE DOCTOR"—THE CAPETOWN MINE—MULES, LITERATURE, AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS.

It is pretty generally known that there is a "table-cloth" at Capetown. Its proper resting-place is Table Mountain. When the flat top of that celebrated hill is clear (I write of the summer season) the thirty thousand inhabitants of Capetown may go forth in comfort if they can stand the blazing sunshine, but as surely as that pure white cloud—the table-cloth—rests on the summit of Table Mountain, so surely does the gale known as the "south-easter" come down like a wolf on the fold.

The south-easter is a sneezer, and a frequent visitor at the Cape in summer. Where it comes from no one can tell: where it goes to is best known to itself: what it does in passing is painfully obvious to all. Fresh from the Antarctic seas it swoops down on the southern shores of

Africa, and sweeps over the land as if in search of a worthy foe. It apparently finds one in Table Mountain, which, being 3582 feet high, craggy and precipitous, meets the enemy with frowning front, and hurls him back discomfited—but not defeated.

Rallying on the instant the south-easter rushes up over its cloud-capped head and round its rugged sides, and down its dizzy slopes, and falls with a shriek of fiendish fury on the doomed city. Oceans of sand and dust are caught up by it, whirled round as if in mad ecstasy, and dashed against the faces of the inhabitants—who tightly shut their thirty thousand mouths and sixty thousand eyes as they stoop to resist the onset. Then the south-easter yells while it sweeps dust, small stones, twigs, leaves, and stray miscellanies, right over Signal Hill into the South Atlantic.

This is bad enough, but it is a mere skirmish —only the advance guard of the enemy. Supposing this attack to have been commenced in the morning, the remainder of the day is marked by a series of violent assaults with brief intervals of repose. In rapid succession the south-easter brings up its battalions and hurls them on the mountain. It leaps over the moat and ramparts of the "castle" with hilarious furor, roars down

the cannons' throats, shrieks out at the touch-holes, and lashes about the town right and left, assaulting and violating, for the south-easter respects neither person nor place. It rattles roofs and windows, and all but overturns steeples and chimneys; it well-nigh blows the shops inside out, and fills them with dust; it storms the barracks and maltreats the soldiers; it compels the shutting up of sun-umbrellas, or reverses and blows them to ribbons; it removes hats and bonnets by the score, and sweeps up small pebbles in its mad career, so that one feels as if being painfully pelted with buck-shot; it causes the shipping to strain fearfully at its cables, and churns the waters of Table Bay into a seething mass of snow and indigo.

All this time the sun shines intensely in a cloudless sky, and beautifies the "cloth" which floats on Table Mountain, undulating on its surface, or pouring over its edge like a Niagara of wool, to be warmed into invisibility before tumbling half-way down the mighty precipice that backs the town.

Although I have compared the south-easter to an enemy, he is in reality a friend. The inhabitants call him the "Cape doctor," because in the

general clearance he sweeps away bad smells, the natural result of bad drainage.

But the south-easter was *not* blowing when I arrived at the ancient capital of South Africa. The "cloth" was drawn; the crags of the mountain, the white buildings and green groves of the town and suburbs, were unsullied by mist or dust as we steamed into the Bay, and the rugged outlines of the hills of the interior were distinctly visible through the warm haze.

The suburbs of the city are exceedingly beautiful, and here many of the principal inhabitants have built elegant mansions, to which they retire after the business of each day to escape the heat, dust, and smells of the town. A short line of railroad runs to these verdant spots at one side, while a tramway extends on the other. In another direction the railway runs by Stellenbosch and the Paarl to Wellington and Worcester—the beginning, it is to be hoped, of that great system which is one day to embrace all the land south of the equator!

It may surprise some people to be told that there is a mine—a rich and prolific mine—at Capetown. Nevertheless, such is undoubtedly the case.

This mine is more extensive and valuable than

any of the diamond or gold mines of the Orange River or the Transvaal. Indeed it is one of the most extensive mines in the world. It is, as already said, exceedingly prolific, and is marked by one grand peculiarity, namely, that among those who devote themselves to the working of it there are no disappointed or unsuccessful diggers. Another peculiarity is, that very little capital is required to work it. The digger is not obliged to purchase "claims," for it is almost if not altogether "Free."

The only capital that must be sunk in it is Time, and of that even one hour a day will suffice to bring up vast stores of wealth from its unfathomable depths, while the labour bestowed tends to rest rather than to weary the body, at the same time that it enlarges the mind and invigorates the soul.

Still another peculiarity of this mine is, that its products are various and innumerable. You must go to Australia or to California for gold, to Golconda or Kimberley for diamonds, to Mexico or Spain for silver, to Cornwall for copper, tin, and lead, and to Sweden for iron; but in this mine you will find the various metals and gems in neighbouring "pockets" and nuggets, and seams and beds. Here you may gather the golden opinions of the ancients in close

proximity to those of the moderns. Here you will find pearls of thought, sparkling gems of imagery, broad seams of satire, and silvery streams of sentiment, with wealth of wisdom and of wit. Hard iron-fisted facts also, and funny mercurial fancies are to be found here in abundance, and there are tons of tin in the form of rubbish, which is usually left at a pit's mouth, and brings little or no "tin" to those who brought it to light, while there are voluminous layers of literary lead, whose weight and dulness render the working of them tedious; —but this need not, and does not, dishearten the digger, for in all mines the poor and worthless material is ever in excess of that which is valuable, and miserable indeed must be the spirit of him who should refuse to manipulate the "dirt" because the large nuggets and gems are few and far between. Throughout all the cuttings flow glittering brooks of knowledge, and also many crystal rivulets drawn from the pure waters of the River of Life.

The mine of which I write is the Public Library of Capetown.

And let it not be supposed that I exaggerate or over-estimate this mine. It is not to be spoken of merely as the best of the colonial libraries. It

unquestionably takes rank as one of the noted libraries of the world, and South Africa has reason to be proud of, and grateful to, the men who, by their enlightened schemes and liberality, were the means of creating what is at once a mine and a monument to the colony.

But Capetown boasts of many other institutions which are well worthy of notice. It is—and has been since its foundation by Van Riebeek in 1652—the seat of Governments; an honour which has occasionally been converted into a dishonour by reason of the character of its governors both ancient and modern. It is also the seat of the Supreme Court and of the University of the Cape of Good Hope. It possesses a first-rate "South African museum," two cathedrals, many churches, a castle, fort, barracks, and other buildings too numerous to mention. Also a splendid breakwater, patent slip, and docks.

From the sublime to the ridiculous is well known to be but a step. From mines of knowledge to matter-of-fact mules may seem a rather long step. If it is, the blame of my taking it must rest on the force of association. From the library you can walk in a few minutes to the docks, and docks has brought me to mules. I

saw a ship-load of mules there, and it was a sight not to be forgotten.

Have you ever seen a fair stand-up fight between men and mules? It is not easy to say which of the two combatants is the more mulish. I went one day to the docks and chanced to witness a conflict. They were discharging the mules—the men were—from the hold of the small vessel which had brought them over sea from South America. "Victory or death" was undoubtedly the motto of each. Of course man prevailed because of superior power,—not obstinacy.

Many days, ay weeks, had these mules spent on the heaving deep; no doubt they had all been sea-sick, certainly they had been half killed, but when I went down into the hold of that ship, where there must have been at least fifty animals, the hundred ears of all of them lay quite flat, pinned to their necks as a desperate pirate might nail his colours to the mast, while deep unutterable hate and dogged resolution gleamed from every eye.

They were ranged along the sides of the ship in two rows. The rows had been full all the voyage, but when I saw them half the animals

had been got on shore, so that there was plenty of room for the remnant to career about and kick defiance at their human persecutors. What charmed me most was not the triumph of intelligence over brute force, but the application of brute force on both sides, with just sufficient mechanical addition on the part of the men to render their power irresistible.

When I entered the hold, the stench of which was almost overpowering, I could see nothing in the dim light, but I could hear the wild clattering of hoofs on wooden floors, the little shrieks of irrepressible fury, and the deep firmly uttered commands—such as "Now, then, Dick, look out!" "Grab 'im!" "Dig into 'im!" "Twist 'is tail!" "That 's it!" "Hup!"

My eyes soon becoming accustomed to the dim light, I saw a trembling mule in the embrace of three men. It trembled with passion only. One had passed a stout sheet under it. Next moment there was an order to "hoist away," and the mule went past me, with rigid limbs, high into the air, whence it was lowered I could not see whither, and disappeared.

Meanwhile the three men went viciously at another animal. They were unusually strong

men, with immense chests, and brawny arms bared to the shoulders. They panted and perspired freely, and had been severely dishevelled by their recent struggles.

I saw the dim outline of a mule, in the dark recesses of the hold to which he had retired, crushing his companions against the bulk-heads of the ship. He evidently knew that his hour was come.

To this demon Dick advanced with a short rope in his hand. The mule eyed him with a gleam of malignity. Its ears became if possible flatter. Dick made a loop on the rope, and leaning over the breast-high barricade between him and his adversary made a cast after the manner of South Americans, but the mule jerked his head aside, and the lasso missed him. While Dick was preparing for another cast, Tom came up behind him with a sly motion. The mule observed Tom, let fly both heels with a tremendous crash on the barrier, and bolted to the other end of the ship. There Harry met him with a stick, and turned him back whence he came.

Again Dick advanced, made a successful cast, and drew the noose tight. For a few moments a perfect shower of kicks was delivered at the barrier and on the sides of the ship, but the three

men did not wait till the creature was exhausted: they had no time for that. Two of them hauled the mule's head by main force to the edge of the barrier, the third leaning far over caught its tail, and instantly drew it broadside on. It was still some distance from the spot under the hatchway where the band and tackle were to be attached. Towards this Tom and Dick dragged the beast by the head, while Harry assisted with the tail. No power on earth could have made that mule walk! With its ears back and all its legs planted stiffly forward, it was made to slide in the required direction by main force. The place of execution reached, Dick jammed its head against the barrier, Tom hauled its tail taut over the same and made fast. There was no intentional cruelty in their actions, but difficult work had to be quickly done, and they could not afford to be squeamish. Obstinate violence had to be overcome by resolute vigour. The mule was now helplessly fixed, with its tongue hanging out and its eyes protruding. Nevertheless, in that condition it continued, without ceasing, to struggle and try to kick, and flatten its ears. It was a magnificent exhibition of determination to resist to the very death!—a glorious quality when exercised in a good cause,

thought I,—my mind reverting to patriots and martyrs.

Meanwhile Harry had passed the broad band under the mule, drawn it over its back, and attached the big hook to it. The signal was given to the men who managed the tackle on deck, and the animal bounded into empty space.

It was at that moment I made the discovery that a mule's spirit resides in its legs. Its last act on earth, before leaving, was to deliver a concentrated double-kick at the barrier, but the instant it found itself in air its flattened ears sprung up with an air of horrified astonishment, and all its legs hung straight and rigid, the four hoofs coming together as if in abject supplication to any one, or anything, that could deliver. Not the smallest effort did it make; not a trace of self-will did it display, while it shot upwards through the hatchway nearly to the yard-arm, whence it obtained its first bird's-eye view of Capetown docks. For one moment it hung, while it was being swung over the quay, whither it was lowered, and its feet once more came in contact with mother-earth. Then, but not till then, did the cataleptic affection of its limbs depart, and the spirit of its ears and heels return. With a bound

it sprang into the air, but, before it had time to think, a human enemy caught its rope, and drew its head tight to an iron post. Another such enemy cast off the broad band and tackle, and the creature was suddenly let go free. Its final act was to flourish its heels in the air, and utter a squeal of rage as it trotted into the midst of a group of its kindred which had already been treated in the same way.

Truly the exhibition of trenchant power and passion is a piquant spectacle!

Returning from the consideration of body to soul and mind, I have to remark that there is a daily attendance of 5000 children at the schools of Capetown—if not more; and there are eight newspapers, besides other periodical literature, for the benefit of the children of larger growth. Altogether the means of intellectual culture is very considerable. Half a century ago it was very much the reverse.

The first newspaper in the colony—except the *Government Gazette*—was published here in 1824 by the enterprising and spirited Mr. Greig of Capetown. The able and accomplished John Fairbairn, with the gifted poet Thomas Pringle, became its joint editors. But these were troublous

times. The "liberty of the press" had not been established, and was not recognised. That tyrannical Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, was then in power, and communication with the mother country was unfrequent and slow, so that wrongs and grievances were not easily understood, and still less easily redressed. The infant newspaper, named the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, had a stormy beginning. It was a "weekly," and was published in both the English and Dutch languages. About the same time the first number of a two-monthly magazine, named the *South African Journal*, was issued. It was conducted by the same editors, also a periodical in Dutch, named the *Zuid Afrikaansche Tijdschrift*, which was edited by the Rev. Mr. Faure.

Such a spirited literary commencement, under men of great ability and high principle, bade fair to inaugurate an era of progress that might have quickly led the colony to a far greater height of moral, mental, and, by consequence, physical prosperity than it has ever yet attained, but the publishers and editors were men of liberal sentiments, and Lord Charles Somerset was pre-eminently il-liberal. He established a censorship of the *Advertiser*. Messrs. Fairbairn and Pringle

refused to act under a censorship, and Mr. Greig announced that the publication would be discontinued until the decision of His Majesty's Government on the subject should be ascertained.

Men who, in virtue of some imaginary superiority, assume the paternal guidance and guardianship of their weak and erring fellow-mortals generally lose their tempers when resisted. The Governor became so enraged by this appeal to a higher power, that he issued a warrant directing that the press should be sealed up, and ordering Mr. Greig to leave the colony within a month. A few days later and the *South African Journal* was discontinued in like manner.

It is ever thus. Since the days of feudalism, those who would lord it over their fellows with a high hand find it impossible to attain their ends without shutting these "fellows'" mouths, and having an army to back them! When a man begins a demoralising course, one never knows where he will stop, or to what lengths he will go. Having "shut up" the press and banished the press-man, Lord Charles next issued a decree that men should not dare to hold public meetings on pain of—I forget exactly what, but he enforced his laws rigorously, and sent men—I'm not sure

about women—to prison, like Saul of Tarsus. Having attained to a state of peace, after the manner of a Turkish Sultan or Nebuchadnezzar, the Governor soon found out that he had been born a few centuries too late, and had to eat humble pie.

He was under the necessity of revoking the order for Mr. Greig's banishment, and, sending for Mr. Pringle, endeavoured to persuade him to continue the *Journal*. This Mr. Pringle refused to do unless the press were placed under legal protection, whereupon the tyrant was roused again to fury and to new acts of high-handed oppression. He forbade the establishment of literary and scientific societies; threatened to put in force the illegal laws against so-called illegal meetings, and finally compelled Mr. Pringle, who was a *gentleman* as well as a scholar, to give up the contest and retire from the colony.

Mr. Fairbairn, however, was made of sterner stuff. He stuck to his colours till, in 1825, authority was received from England to resume the publication of the *Commercial Advertiser*. Things went well for a time, but unfortunately the London *Times* had the amazing audacity to write an article in which it presumed to reflect

somewhat on Lord Charles Somerset, and Mr. Fairbairn was guilty of the unpardonable sin of copying it. The injured governor became frantic, as usual, and Mr. Fairbairn went to England to plead his own cause. He succeeded in obtaining for the colony the inestimable boon of a free press, and returned in 1828 to resume the editorship of the *Commercial Advertiser*.

The sparkling streams thus set free have flowed and waxed in volume ever since, and, despite the little rivulets of mud which will occasionally flow into such channels, and somewhat cloud the surface, their waters are wholesomely mingled and clarified when they get into the great ocean of public opinion.

There is a custom-house at Capetown. It is not because of being one of the noteworthy buildings of the port that I mention it, but because of its having been to me a personal nuisance on the occasion of my arrival in the colony. A fellow-passenger had informed me—whether rightly or wrongly I knew not and cared not—that watches, jewellery, and guns, were among the taxable articles. Knowing that my portmanteau contained no such articles, except a brass watch-guard, I presented myself to the official with an air of

conscious innocence. I had hoped that, like many such officials in France and elsewhere, he would have been content with an assurance that I had "nothing to declare" and the offer of my keys, but I was mistaken. This particular official was perhaps a "new broom." It may be that he had caught some smugglers not long before, and the excitement had not yet worn off. At all events, instead of allowing me to pass he ordered me to open my portmanteau.

While I was engaged in doing so he opened my shoulder-bag and eyed its contents curiously. They were not numerous. He found nothing contraband, and appearing somewhat disappointed, applied his nose to it.

"It has a queer smell," he remarked.

As the bag had frequently done duty at pic-nics and been loaded with flasks and sandwiches, I was not surprised. Besides, it occurred to me that no tax was levied on "queer smells," though such a tax might have been, with advantage, levied on the town itself. It would certainly have produced an immense revenue. I smiled, however, in a propitiatory manner and said nothing.

Having shut the bag this official opened the portmanteau, and began to examine each article

in a way that would have rendered it probable he might have finished sometime within the next twenty-four hours. He slowly turned over my shirts and flannels as if he expected to find mines of jewellery in the folds thereof. Suddenly he came on the brass chain and his eye glittered, which was more than the chain did. It had to be re-deposited with a sigh. I began to grow despairing. Presently he took up my Bible and opened it. Was he going to refresh himself with a chapter? His turning over the leaves very slowly gave reason for the suspicion; or did the obtuse creature expect to find watches and gun-barrels between the leaves? I hoped that he might chance upon the passage, "Let all things be done decently and in order," but he missed it. At last he shut the Bible, and, laying it down, proceeded to exhume a morning coat.

At this point one of his superiors told him that that was enough, to my immense relief, and the too-conscientious official allowed me to re-pack and lock-up my violated property.

Is mankind still in a "middle age" period of the world's history, that governments cannot find means of laying restraint on smugglers without wearisome, childish, and absolutely useless ex-

amination of the traps of respectable travellers? I say "useless" advisedly, because the universal custom of customs-officials all over the world is to go through an irritating ceremony of imperfect, or merely nominal inspection, which, while it causes great trouble, delay, and worry to the innocent, never by any chance detects the guilty, and only gives to insolent jacks-in-office power to extract bribes and to insult and annoy those unfortunates whose honest indignation becomes too strong for their powers of repression.

LETTER XIV.

STELLENBOSCH, ETC.

An agreeable surprise is not only interesting to the recipient, but sometimes to his friends. I received one at Capetown, which is worthy of record on several grounds.

For the proper elucidation of that surprise I must turn aside for a little to touch on a subject which bears on the future well-being of the whole of this continent—I refer to the romantic, short-lived, disastrous, and yet, I hold, successful expedition styled "The Universities' Mission to Central Africa." The account of it, by one of the survivors, is, next to that of south-sea Williams, the most interesting volume on missionary enterprise I ever read.

This mission started in the year 1860 for the Zambesi, where it was met and for a time joined by the great Dr. Livingstone. Its leader, Bishop Mackenzie, who laid down his life in the

cause, was a man as well as a missionary. By that I mean that he was manly,—a quality which is not sufficiently appreciated, in some quarters, as being a most important element in the missionary character.

While on his way up to the selected sphere of labour in Central Africa, the Bishop and his party, with Dr. Livingstone, got into the region of the accursed slave-trade, and one day came unexpectedly on a band of slaves. They were chiefly women and children, bound together with sticks and chains, and herded by a few armed slave-dealers, who, having murdered their male defenders and burned their villages, were driving them to the coast for shipment to eastern lands—largely, it is said, to the land of the amiable Turk, about the integrity of whose Empire so much has been said of late.

With characteristic zeal and energy Dr. Livingstone advanced with a few men to set these poor wretches free. The slave-catchers did not await the onset: they bravely fired a shot or two and fled. To set the slaves free was naturally a most congenial work for the good Bishop who had gone there to free the black man from the slavery of sin. The sticks were cut, the bonds were unloosed,

and the people were told that they were free to go back to their homes. Homes! Their homes were in ashes, and the brave hearts and stout arms that might have reared new homes were cold and powerless in death, while armed Arab and Portuguese bands were prowling about the land gathering together more victims. To send these unfortunates away would have been to insure their death or re-capture. There was no alternative left but to keep and guard them.

Thus the Bishop suddenly found himself in possession of a small flock with which to begin his mission.

He accepted the charge, conducted them to the region where the mission was to be established, and finally settled down with them there.

Some time after this there came a rumour that a large and powerful band of slavers was approaching the settlement with many slaves in possession, and with the intention of attacking the tribe among whom the missionaries were located. What was now to be done? To have remained inactive until the slavers marched up to their huts would have been equivalent to suicide. It would have been worse, for it would have insured the putting

to flight of the few men of the tribe—who it seems were not celebrated for courage—and the result would have been the overthrow of the mission and the recapture of the women and children who had already been delivered.

In these trying circumstances Bishop Mackenzie and his people betook themselves to prayer and consultation. Dr. Livingstone had left them by that time. They came to the conclusion that self-defence called for vigorous action, and, with musket and rifle, sallied forth to meet the men-stealers, with the Bishop at their head.

On reaching the position of the enemy they paused at a distance of above six hundred yards. A group of Arab slavers were standing on a hill together. One of the mission party kneeled, and with an Enfield rifle sent a bullet over their heads. The effect was powerful! The slavers, accustomed to the smooth-bore musket, had thought themselves quite safe at such a distance. They were panic-stricken: perhaps the unexpected sight of white men aided the effect. At all events, when another bullet was dropped into the midst of them, they took to flight. The missionaries, like good generals, seized their opportunity, charged home, and chased the

scoundrels into the woods. Thus, with little fighting, they gained an important victory, and became possessed of a second large band of slaves —chiefly women and children—who had been forsaken by their terrified captors.

These the Bishop resolved to add to his settlement. Indeed, as in the previous case, he had no alternative. They were at once liberated and conducted to the station, and one of the poor black children—a little girl named Dauma—was carried home by Mackenzie on his own shoulders.

Soon afterwards the mission failed in that quarter. Among other *contretemps* disease attacked and carried off several of the chief Europeans of the party. The earnest enthusiastic Bishop himself died there in his Master's cause, and left his bones in the swamps of the Shire River. The attempt to kindle the gospel light in that direction was abandoned, and the head-quarters of the mission to Central Africa was removed to the island of Zanzibar.

All this, and a great deal more, had I read with profound interest, many years before my visit to the Cape, and the whole subject had made a deep impression on my memory—especially the figure of the gallant Bishop returning from his

raid on the men-stealers with the little wearied Dauma on his shoulders!

Well, one day I went to visit the "Saint George's Orphanage for Girls," in Capetown; one of those modest establishments which, created by the liberality of those Christians who sympathise with the weak and the pitiful, continue to pour forth perennial and sparkling streams into the ever-increasing ocean of "good works." Under the fostering direction of Miss Arthur, this institution supports forty-three orphans at the amazingly small sum of £8, 10s. a head per annum. It is maintained by voluntary contributions, and, although I do not now write to plead its cause, there can be no harm in remarking that it well deserves support.

Over the dormitories and schools, etc., was I conducted, and at last came to a class-room in which were assembled some hundred or so of *black* orphans—infants almost, most of them, and irresistibly comic in their little looks and actions.

It was here that I received the agreeable surprise before referred to. The teacher of this class was as black as her pupils.

"She is herself an orphan, one of the best girls in our school," said Miss Arthur, referring to her, "and a most sincere Christian. She was

saved from the slavers in Central Africa many years ago."

"What!" I exclaimed, "the little girl who was saved by the missionaries of the Shire River?"

"The same."

"And who was carried home on the shoulders of Bishop Mackenzie?"

"Yes; her name is Dauma."

I shook hands with Dauma immediately, and claimed old acquaintance on the spot!

There is something very gratifying in thus having one's faith strengthened. I cannot say that I ever doubted the existence of Dauma, or the facts connected with her history, yet there was something quite new in the feelings with which I thought of that Central African Mission when I thus beheld the actual fruit of it standing before me. We may indeed say of it that the expedition was in some respects disastrous, but I mentally scouted the idea of calling it "unsuccessful" as I looked on the earnest face of this black girl while she guided the fair spirits of the hundred little black creatures who sat there grinning, and gazing, and evidently doting upon her.

But much more shall doubtless yet be told of the success of that Mission, for there must have been

many a man and woman converted through it who was not sent to Capetown, like Dauma, to illustrate the fact and encourage those who are apt to grow disheartened by what appear small results. It has already been said, I believe, that the present missions to Central Africa are finding their way made a little more easy than might otherwise have been the case, in consequence of the blessed Christian influence exercised on the natives during that short but brilliant campaign of the Universities' Mission in the year 1860.

Chief among the many interesting visits which I paid while at Capetown was one to the beautiful towns of Stellenbosch and Wellington. Both are but a short distance from the capital, and connected with it by rail. The former is one of the oldest towns of the colony. Many of the French refugees settled there in 1685.

When, in 1684, Governor Van der Stell founded the lovely town of Stellenbosch, and led out the sparkling waters of its river to irrigate trees which afterwards became very giants of the forest, little did he, or his oppressive and tyrannical son and successor, imagine that they had sown the seed of that which was destined to become an academic grove, in the pleasant retirement of which lads

and men should study the universal laws of matter and of mind, and learn those blessed precepts of God which cut at the roots of all oppression and tyranny, and set the body, soul, and spirit free. Yet so it was. Stellenbosch began to grow, in a century and in an atmosphere of grossest tyranny, injustice, and cruelty. At the present day it is a centre of education, spiritual and secular, with a College, and schools of the Dutch Reformed Church ; with professors and teachers of proved ability, who go about their work—it seemed to me—not only in a philosophical, but in an emphatically Christian spirit.

During my brief but delightful sojourn there I enjoyed the hospitality, and the kindness, of Professor Hoffmeyer, and met with Professor Murray, the Rev. Mr. Neetling, and other men of learning and genial spirit.

At a supper given by the Young Men's Christian Association I had the pleasure of listening to the eloquence of the Rev. A. Murray of Wellington, and also to that of the pupils of the Theological Seminary of Stellenbosch, some of whom, it struck me, bid fair to tread in the footsteps of their teachers—if not to surpass them—both as to goodness and eloquence !

That, however, which made the deepest impression on me during this visit was the manner in which the work of training the young is conducted. Everything seemed to be done with an amount of wisdom and vigour which cannot fail to tell most beneficially and extensively on future generations.

Well do I remember in days gone by, how, with my juvenile mind addled and my juvenile fingers tingling after an application of the "tawse," I have stared at my arithmetic book in despair—hopelessly ignorant of the meaning of words and terms, utterly incapable of comprehending explanatory "rules," passionately averse to learning in every form, and longingly anxious for the period of emancipation to arrive, when I should be old and big enough to thrash my master! No such feelings, sentiments, or difficulties can ever find a place in the breasts of those fortunate pupils whose happy lot has been cast in the Seminaries of Stellenbosch and Wellington. The Cape Colony sets the world an example which it would do well to follow—perhaps I should have said that such example is set by the system of the Dutch Reformed Church, of which the Rev. Andrew Murray is there, I believe, the soul and centre.

The girls' classes of the schools engrossed my attention, and filled me with admiration, because these are taught by American ladies on a splendid American system, which is probably well known to many people, though it was quite new to me. "Honour to whom honour is due." Truly our cousin Jonathan is wise in the matter of education! He thwarts the tendency that pupils have to glance at their neighbours' slates, and save themselves trouble, by having a huge black band, three or four feet deep, painted round the entire schoolroom, which band, with chalk, forms the general giant-slate of the establishment. Small slates are dispensed with, and cribbing is rendered impossible. He puts questions in such a manner that the pupil cannot fail to understand the subject of study. He will not pass over a hard word without ascertaining that the exact meaning thereof is understood. He not only teaches rules, but goes into the reason of the rules, and, above all, he constantly demands to know the "why and wherefore" of all that is said and done.

Miss Gilson, the very intelligent lady who had charge of the class when I entered one of the Stellenbosch schools, put the "young ladies" through some of their paces. She set three or

four of them at different parts of the walls, and gave to each a complex sum in arithmetic.

While these were engaged working out their sums, the teacher put a series of questions on arithmetic to the rest of the class, which were calculated to draw out the minds of the girls, and give them an intelligent idea of the ground-work or principles on which arithmetical processes are founded.

After a little skirmishing of this sort, the teacher observed that one of the young ladies at the wall had finished her sum, and thereupon called on her to explain it. Memory intrudes herself here,—I faintly recall the glance of my old master at my slate, and the "Yes, it's right," or the "No, it's wrong, go back to your seat and correct it," which was the end of every juvenile effort on my part. How different the process at Stellenbosch! The pupil, in a very modest and weak voice, gave a neat little lecture on her sum, in which the word "because" was of very frequent occurrence. She commenced with a clear statement of the question to be wrought out, and went on to explain that she had stated it thus, because of such and such reasons, and had multiplied by so and so, because of laws which

she proved herself capable of expounding, and thereafter had divided by this or subtracted from that, because of rules whose rectitude she showed to be altogether unquestionable, and thus step by step she reasoned out her process, until she pointed triumphantly to the desired result in the last line.

One of the sum-workers had made a mistake in her calculations, and this gave the teacher an opportunity to ask the whole class to point it out. Thereupon a brisk fire of remark began, in which several of the girls showed a tendency to make random shots at the error, and were mildly snubbed by being called on to give a reason for their belief! At last the error was detected, and the fallacy which caused it was exposed.

At Wellington—about two hours by rail further on—the same admirable system prevails. Here stands the Huguenot Seminary, founded by the Rev. Andrew Murray, already referred to, brother of the professor at Stellenbosch. It is so named because of being situated in a district of South Africa which was originally peopled by French refugees. Although there is, I understand, to be a theological department ere long for the

training of young men for the ministry, this seminary is at present chiefly devoted to girls.

The design of the seminary is "to give to its pupils a sound education, and at the same time so to mould and form the character that the young ladies may go out with an earnest purpose in life, and thus be the better fitted for any sphere to which God in his providence may call them." So says the prospectus of 1875. It also sets forth that "another design is to train teachers who may go out, in some measure, to meet the pressing wants of the country." Assuredly these pressing wants will be met, and that speedily, for common sense is the prevailing characteristic in the management, and "faith that worketh by love" seemed to me to be the prevailing power among teachers and pupils. There is much talk in Great Britain just now about the higher education of women. Let those who talk come out to South Africa, and they shall see their pet schemes carried out and in full swing in Wellington. It chanced to be examination day—the last day of the session—when I arrived, so that I had a good opportunity of seeing and hearing the results of the year's course. The teachers—nearly all of them American ladies, brought over, as I

understood it, expressly to apply their system—were seated in a row in front of the class. Order and method prevailed everywhere; teachers and pupils knew their duty thoroughly. There was no "ordering," no loud or authoritative "commanding." It was not necessary. A nod from Miss Ferguson, the principal of the seminary, or a quiet remark, was sufficient to set the machinery in motion. The pupils acted with the quietness and precision of soldiers, but without their stiffness. Let it not be supposed that the "system" involved rigidity. The girls were as graceful, natural, and unconstrained as one could wish them to be. I cannot go into the minutiæ of that examination. Suffice it to say, that I recognised the same wise, common-sense elements at Wellington that had aroused my admiration at Stellenbosch; but there was more to be seen and heard at Wellington, because there, as I have said, was the training of teachers, and the examination to which they were subjected was very severe. They were not only questioned closely on, it appeared to me, almost the entire circle of human knowledge—including, in their course, algebra, geography, history, botany, rhetoric, natural philosophy, astronomy, geology,

mental philosophy, analysis, composition, French, Latin, German, moral philosophy, essays, and the study of the Bible—but were also made to explain *how* they would proceed to teach children committed to their care, and to give their reasons for the methods adopted. But the beauty of this system became more apparent to me when I was told that these same girls (of whom there are above ninety in two establishments) had to cook their own dinners, and make their own beds, and, in short, perform all the domestic duties of the households except the "dirty work," for which latter only one indoor servant was retained for each house, and yet these girls' hands were soft, white, and lady-like, and their fingers taper, and with these same fingers, too, some of them paint beautifully, and many play the piano with considerable taste and power.

I saw these girls afterwards out in their garden chatting and laughing heartily under the apricot trees, eating the golden fruit (think of that, apricots in December!), and afterwards I saw them at their tea-table eating bread and *not* butter—no, the heat, or something else, rendered that commodity scarce at the time in the Huguenot Seminary—eating bread and sheep's-tail fat! I tried

it myself, and can pronounce it good and wholesome—I'm not sure that I found it palatable. After tea I saw them quietly collecting and washing the cups and saucers, and as I looked at their busy hands, and pretty faces, and healthy, graceful figures, and reflected that they had been assembled there from every district in the country, and would, in process of time, be scattered back to the regions whence they came, to become loving and learned centres of Christian influence, I fell into a meditative mood. I thought of Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Froude, and the Molteno Government and the Paterson opposition. I pondered the fierce battle of the "Outs" and "Ins," with their incomprehensible differences and divergencies of opinion and sentiment. Then I reflected that with all their differences these various men and bodies seemed to be united and agreed in at least one opinion and on one point —namely, that there is a great and grand future in store for South Africa. Awaking from my reverie, I said to myself—"Yes, you are right, and here, methinks, in this seminary, you have the seed being planted and watered, which shall one day cover this land with ripe and rich fruit, and which will tend powerfully to bring about

that great future ; for these girls will one day guide your sons to the loftiest heights of physical, mental, and moral philosophy, and your daughters into the widest spheres of woman's vocation, and your servants to the profoundest depths of domestic economy, and that not merely because knowledge is pleasant in itself, and profitable alike to individuals and communities, but because of their love for the dear Saviour who has redeemed them from the power of ignorance as well as of sin, and whose blessed teachings form the ground-work of whatever superstructure may be raised at the Huguenot Seminary of Wellington."

LETTER XV.

THE LAST.

And now, Periwinkle, my good friend, it is time to draw these erratic letters to a close. Your patience has been severely tried, no doubt, but if you rise from the perusal of them a sadder man, it is to be hoped you will also be a wiser.

Yet I would not lay down the pen until I have made a slight effort to draw together these trailing and knotless threads, so as to bind the letters, after a fashion, into a harmonious bundle.

Do not imagine, however, that I am about to moralise very seriously. As my previous letters have been outliney, and the reverse of exhaustive, my concluding epistle shall be sketchy. I remember your fondness for desultory talk, light confabulation,—what may be termed hazy intercourse. Here is something that may perchance tickle your fancy, and will not task your reasoning powers.

What, then, are we to think of the hopes and prospects and the present condition of South Africa?

In the past we find a rich and beautiful land taken possession of, misused, misunderstood, and mismanaged by the Dutch, with a few streaks of light crossing the dark picture, where a naturally sagacious and well-disposed Governor held the reins for a longer or shorter period. Two false principles conduced to the blackness of these dark-ages of the Cape. One was the holding of the land for the exclusive benefit of a commercial company; the other was the upholding and practice of Slavery.

In the more recent past we find the same land taken possession of, misunderstood, and mismanaged by the British. But the latter picture is decidedly lighter in tone, in fact a comparatively bright one, with, however, many deep shadows and numerous dark streaks disfiguring it where a naturally stupid and tyrannical governor held the reins for a longer or shorter time. The two great principles which conduced to the lightening of these happier times were, I need hardly say, the well-known British policy of governing with a view to the weal of all classes,

and the upholding of personal freedom. The introduction—on the latter principle—of the varied forms of Missionary enterprise, has put into the picture a number of effective high-lights which are very pleasant to look at, despite the fact that they are marred here and there with a few blots and a little bad drawing, such as, of course, may be expected in all things human.

Now these references to the past, to personal freedom and so forth, bring me to a point which requires clearing up.

It is this—some people say that the land originally belonged to the natives. I fear, Periwinkle, that you are yourself smitten with this erroneous view, which is no wonder, because many better and wiser men than yourself, excuse me, are similarly misled.

The argument runs thus:—The natives were found in South Africa *in possession*, therefore we are bound to regard them as the rightful owners. Are we indeed?

A band of robbers come to my country-house (would that I knew where it is!) at a time when my kith and kin to the earliest and latest generation are assembled there. The robbers murder us all, and bury us, root and branch, in the kitchen

garden. The police chance to pass that way—too late—and find them in possession. There is not a living soul to object to their presence, not a voice left to question their right. Are these robbers therefore the rightful owners?

What! you don't think so, and you never said so, and the cases are not parallel, because in the supposed case it would have been well known that the country-house (which you hope I'll discover some day!) belonged to me, and never did belong to the robbers even although they *were* found in possession and no one had seen them drive me and mine out and murder us all?

Oh! Periwinkle, how can you deceive yourself by such sophistries? In reading the accounts of Kafirs and Kafirdom we are told that little is known as to where they came from—though Egypt is suggested—but no uncertainty hangs over the fact that they pushed their way southward with fire and sword and horrid cruelty, drove back or exterminated the *then* "owners of the land," and remained in possession. No doubt their predecessors did the same to somebody else, and they to some other somebody, so that they were all robbers and murderers together.

What! The same may be said of every land

on the face of the earth—even of England—and therefore there is and can be no such thing as a rightful owner according to *that* view?

Quite true, Periwinkle, according to *that* view, and therefore I hold that mere so-called "possession" of a land, with no one to come forward and show a better title than your own, does not constitute ownership. Presence in a land does not constitute possession of it. What would you think and say of the following supposed case?

A big stupid and savage fellow was once wrecked on a large and splendid island, full of everything desirable for human use, with rich productive soil, minerals and metals in abundance, and great capabilities of improvement. Stupid Savage hunts over a small portion of this isle, gathers as much wild fruit as he requires, scratches up a very small garden, plants a potato or two, and lives content.

Ere long a ship is wrecked on the same island. It is a large emigrant vessel. The people are saved with all their belongings. There are several hundreds of them. They proceed at once to make the most of circumstances; find the island desirable; resolve to settle on it; take possession, and begin work.

But Stupid Savage steps forward and objects. "The island is mine," he says. "*I* found it. I am now in possession of it. Pay me a magnificent price for it, and then do your will."

These shipwrecked ones are not like the old Dutch at the Cape. They have a respect for "right." Some of their missionaries have impressed them with the unselfish truths of Christianity. They hold a grand council at which Stupid is invited to state his case. This he does with much energy, being strong for his own rights, though not very solicitous about the rights of others.

One Siftwell rises to reply. "Mr. Stupid Savage" (you see he is polite as well as just), "we have listened to your case and your arguments with profound attention, and I purpose now to point out one or two fallacies in your reasoning, and show what it is that induces my few hundred friends here and myself to object to your premises, differ from you in your mode of conducting the argument, and demur to your conclusions." ("Hear! hear!" from the few hundred friends.) "In the first place, then, you err in supposing that you *possess* this island. You only *inhabit* it, and being the first comer—the one whom we found in

occupation—we consider you entitled to as much of the island as you can make good use of. If, when we arrived, we had found you cultivating all its soil, working all its mines, fencing in its fields, cutting down its timber—in other words, utilising the island, we would have at once recognised your ownership and offered to purchase, or would have left to search for unoccupied lands elsewhere, and wished you success in your noble, not to say arduous undertakings." (Hear! hear! from the few hundred.) "But," continued Mr. Siftwell, turning his bright eyes full on Stupid, "we do not find this to be the case. We find you living in comparative idleness, and totally neglectful of the beauties and riches which Providence has scattered round you in such profusion. You have scratched up a small garden which would not do credit to a horticultural monkey. You have left untouched the stupendous quarries at your very elbow, and have built yourself a hut of mud and sticks, of which a beaver with the slightest claim to self-respect would be ashamed. In your most vigorous hunting excursion you cannot cover a hundredth part of the ground on which your lot has been cast, or make the smallest impression on the game with which it abounds. You lead an

extremely discreditable life, and you have violently resented the few gentle efforts that we have made to improve you since we arrived. In these circumstances we find that you have no claim whatever to this unused, neglected, unimproved, *unpossessed* land, and that your only right is the possession of as much as you can use, or can show a probability of your using. But this right we heartily admit." (Hear! hear!) "Moreover, considering that you were the first comer, we admit your right to the pick and choice of the land and its contents; and to prove to you how thoroughly we recognise your rights, we have resolved to err, if err we must, on the right side, by according to you a very liberal allowance of land, a good deal more indeed than it is possible for you fully to occupy."

Now, Periwinkle, I put it to you—is there not parallelity here? Are not the two millions or so of natives in Colonial Africa a mere drop in that great ocean of mankind which has a perfect right to the hitherto unused, unoccupied, acres of Africa? ay, and to the acres of every other place that is unused and unoccupied. Are the civilised nations of the earth to be cooped up in cities and condemned to herd in close-packed unhealthy

communities because half a dozen "Red Indians" (I speak comparatively) and half a dozen "Red Kafirs" are supposed to have a *right* to their hunting grounds? These "Red" men have no such right. If they utilised the said hunting grounds, even *as* hunting grounds, in any degree approaching to the thoroughness with which English sportsmen utilise a Scotch moor, they might have a shadowy—a slight—plea for the consideration of their claims, but this they do not. They just shoot enough—or compel their wives to graze and milk and plant enough—to keep them in comfortable idleness, and, for the rest, they live like pigs, and care for nothing under the sun but themselves.

Rights these men certainly have, as I have elsewhere told you, but the broad and fertile acres on which they stand are not a part of their rights, except in that degree in which they have a right to claim share with the rest of mankind—and that with all due respect to the priority of their position.

One great authority has fallen into this error with regard to savages. He has written in reference to South Africa: "The land clearly belongs to the inhabitants of it, by as good a title as

England belongs to the English, and Holland to the Dutch." Such a statement induces me to believe that as strength has been ordained in some instances to issue from the lips of babes and sucklings, so nonsense has been in a few cases permitted to proceed from the pens of philosophers. How stands the case?

I have already tried to show you that mere residence in a land does not constitute a righteous claim, and that in this respect the Kafir, the Englishman, and all the world beside, has no proper *right*. As, however, the original owners and their descendants cannot now be found or traced, it follows that we must fall back on some other claim of right, and to my mind that right is, possession without known fraud, and, utilisation. Of course I speak in a wide sense—nationally. If you complicate the question with irrelevant objections as to the conduct and position of eccentric or wicked individuals, you will never come at the truth.

Well, then,—unfraudulent possession. The men our forefathers drove out we do not know, we have not the pleasure of being acquainted with their descendants. Restoration *cannot* be made. Our possession is righteous, just as

the descendant of a long-forgotten highwayman righteously possesses his ill-gotten gains. Thus far the Kafir and Englishman stand on the same level. But now as to utilisation. Every acre of land in Great Britain has been bought and paid for by its present possessor. This is not so with the natives of South Africa. Again, every acre of British soil is fenced in and cultivated, or utilised in some way or other, more or less wisely and well. Not so in the lands where savages dwell. In England there is not a foot of the soil that has not an owner who can show his title-deeds for the same, who can tell you what he did with it last year, and how he means to treat it in this year and the next. No such ownership exists in South Africa. Indeed, many of the acres now possessed by some tribes of Kafirs were violently wrested from other tribes not many years ago—and yet, in the face of these facts, it is said that the claim of the Kafir to the *whole* of the land in which he dwells is equal to that of the Englishman and Dutchman!

A very shallow thinker may easily and logically come to the conclusion that no savage tribe has an inherent right to the possession of the *whole* of the land in which he has been born; but it

requires a body of deep thinkers, and much discussion, to settle the question of *how much* of a land the natives are entitled to.

But enough—if I have not convinced you now, Periwinkle, I cannot convince you at all, and it only remains for me to admit that *perhaps* I am wrong. If this admission tends to elate you unduly, you may counteract it by the consideration that *perhaps* you are not right.

Turn now to another great error that exists in the colony. I refer to the franchise. The qualification for an elector at the Cape is so low that the suffrage is all but "universal." The great absurdity is that the natives (subject to the Queen) possess the elective franchise. Any man, black or white, within the colony who can prove that he earns £25 a year and his diet, or who owns house or land worth £50, may be registered. Fortunately for the colony the great mass of natives don't understand or care for their privileges, but in a land where the blacks are numbered by millions, and the whites only by thousands, you can easily understand what amazing results might flow from such a state of things if the natives chose, or were induced, to exercise their rights.

Are you one of those who will insist on the black man having his "rights," although you cannot see your way out of this difficulty? for difficulty it may become any day, though it is not one just now. Then, let me suggest to you the idea of *plurality of votes*, by which I mean the giving of more votes to one man than to another.

What! Utopian, ridiculous, unworkable, impossible? Ah! Periwinkle, the same was said of the steam-engine, the telegraph, the locomotive,—everything in short that man has proposed, attempted, and carried into effect. There are difficulties in the way, no doubt, but they are not insurmountable. Much of the plan might be carried out with ease. For instance, the learned professions could be easily dealt with. Why not heap votes on the heads of doctors, and stuff them into the pockets and bags of lawyers, and shower them upon clergymen and schoolmasters? A doctor with a hundred votes would thus equal a hundred Kafirs who had only one. It would be more difficult, but not impossible, to rate the merchant classes and others, but it could be done. Income might secure so many votes, property might secure so many. There is great lack of

population at the Cape: well, give men a family qualification; so many sons, so many votes—if daughters, a good many more. Then you might disfranchise bachelors, and transfer their votes to spinsters over a certain age. Thus you would punish the one class, and comfort the other by securing to them a small amount of so-called "woman's rights." Plurality of wives might also be made a disqualification by which you would cut off an immense proportion of Kafirs from their electoral privileges. But why go further? You can easily see how this method would admit the institution of universal suffrage without encountering the risk of a multitude of geese being enabled to swamp the ability, wealth, vigour, sense, and learning of the land by sheer force of numbers. In conclusion, I may say, that the veriest radical could not object to this plan, as it would permit of his fixing his own position on the sliding-scale of electors. Does he wish for more votes? let him work himself up to a higher position in the social scale. Does he find it impossible to do so? then let him rest content, for he has no one to thank—or blame—but himself.

Now, as to Native Policy. This is a subject

which has set many people by the ears in times past, and will doubtless do so in years to come. To go into details would only weary you. But there is one great principle, which, if more generally recognised, would, I think, clear up men's minds not a little. It is this: trust none but the trustworthy. From the first years of the colony down to the present time the savages have, on the whole, proved themselves to be unworthy of trust. Christianity *can* save them—it *may* save them—but, in the mass, it has not saved them yet. There are bright exceptions, but these are few, and not until the improvement becomes national will it be wise to trust the Kafirs. One evil resulting from the trustful policy is that rifles and ammunition have already been suffered to go amongst them. This in case of war will result in a heavier death-roll among our troops and colonists than that of former years. Then, these Kafirs are lazy fellows, and won't work if they can help it. How they are to be made to work, or induced to do it, is one of the difficult Cape problems which I will not even attempt to solve. Some enlightened legislators have even resolved to import John Chinaman for a term of years, and export him home again at the end thereof,

but the condition of America on this question does not seem to hold out an encouraging prospect. We shall see, Periwinkle, you and I, if we live. Meanwhile we must wait and hope for the best.

There is another vexed, and vexing, question which exercises the Cape mind continually. It is confederation. At present the "East and West" are divided by distance and diverse interests, to say nothing of jealousies. Then the Diamond-fields, and the Transvaal, and Natal, etc., are divided from the Cape proper, more or less, and from each other, by still greater distances and still more diverse interests. How these are to be all bound together and welded into a homogeneous and harmonious whole is a question that can be answered only by one who is intimately acquainted with Cape history, manners, customs, and capacities past, present, and—I had almost said—future. Therefore I won't attempt it, my boy, but leave it to your imagination.

As to the resources of the Cape. Her array of products is imposing. She does not manufacture much, it is true, but she is powerful in the raw material. There was a time, not many years ago,

when the colony was retrograding. It had reached a very low ebb indeed, when the tide suddenly turned, and began to flow in a flood of prosperity which has continued ever since. This happy turning of the tide was caused by the discovery of diamonds. Immediately diggers flowed up to Kimberley in shoals from all parts of the world, and, as a matter of course, the necessaries of life followed them. Gold was also found in the Transvaal, and ostrich-farming began to grow into an important branch of industry, while the great staple of the country, sheep-wool, did not diminish.

Now I know you hate statistics. So do I, and so does every right-minded individual. Of what use is it, then, to pester you with such information as that in the year 1875 there were nearly ten million woolled sheep in the colony? Why charge your memory with what it cannot retain, such as, that in the same year the total value of ostrich feathers exported was above £300,000? Those who take special interest in such matters will find suitable food in blue-books. Enough for you and me to know that the Cape colony is a glorious field for enterprise; that, according to universal opinion, a great future lies before it,

and that the energy of the human race in the nineteenth century is quite equal, if not superior, to that of former epochs of the world's history.

Periwinkle, my friend, farewell.

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